CAN WE STILL BE CHRISTIANS?

EUCKEN

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THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

CAN WE STILL BE CHRISTIANS?

BY

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NOBEL PRIZEMAN, 1908
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"LIFE'S BASIS AND LIFE'S IDEAL," ETC.

TRANSLATED BY

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CLASSICAL AND ORIENTAL TRIPOSES, CAMBRIDGE

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1914

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Set up and electrotyped. Published February, 1914. Reprinted September, 1914.

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

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PREFACE

SINCE a book like this has a decidedly personal note, it seems fitting that I should devote a few words to setting forth my personal position in the matter. Influenced by the sombre side of life, I was keenly interested in religious problems from very early days; but at the same time I could never come into friendly relation with the Churches, and I never thought of entering their ministry. Later on, indeed, when philosophy became my life-work, I sought to suppress the religious interest altogether, else I should scarcely have devoted myself so assiduously to a study of Aristotle and philosophical terminology. The old interest, however, would not die, and ever and anon it broke out again, even in the midst of my philosophical pursuits. But the old problem also remained: In the light of our freer convictions, what attitude can we take up, and ought we to take up, towards Christianity? For a long time it has been on my mind to speak out on this subject, but again and again I have postponed the task in the hope of being able to treat it more worthily as years brought me added experience, and to undertake more confidently the no slight responsibility involved in such treatment. It seems to me now, however, that the time has at length come when I should carry out my intention. For, as regards myself, old age draws near, and there is no knowing how long I may still be fresh enough for work. Then, too, the time is ripe. For the conflict over this question has now broken out in earnest, and it becomes a manifest duty to take up a definite position and

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do all I can to further the end for which the conflict is being waged. Thus I have resolved to keep silence no longer.

As regards the content of the book, it will scarcely commend itself to everyone, even leaving party-feeling out of account. Where the problem is so deep-rooted in the personal life, every man has his own particular questions and preferences, and what seems too little to one will be too much for another. So in justification of my method of arranging and unfolding the argument, let me make the following brief observations. Many perhaps will be of opinion that the philosophical exposition occupies too large a space and wanders too far from the main problem. But it was nevertheless quite indispensable in order to give a firm support to my own convictions, so that I might not merely set one opinion against another, — a proceeding which makes discussion of this kind so stale and unprofitable. Many again would have liked a more detailed treatment and more definite suggestions as regards the distinctively religious problems. But we are of opinion that the time for this is not yet ripe. It is important first of all to come to an agreement as to the main direction of our quest, to sketch the outlines of a religious thought-world, and to show that besides tying down religion to a creed, or allowing it to evaporate in subjective sentimentalism, in the manner so popular to-day, there is still another course, — we purposely avoid calling it a middle course, because in this matter there is no question of compromise. How far this course will take us and what further problems we shall find upon the road, it is for the future to determine and our own united effort.

RUDOLF EUCKEN.

JENA, October, 1911.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

THE Translator wishes to express her sincerest thanks to the Rev. Dr. Charles Strong, Melbourne, for his kindness in reading through the proof-sheets and making many most valuable criticisms and suggestions, and also to her husband, Professor Boyce Gibson of the Melbourne University, for his unfailing sympathy and help.

MELBOURNE, December, 1913.

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CAN WE STILL BE CHRISTIANS?

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INTRODUCTION

A SHARP division runs to-day through Christendom, destroying its unity and endangering all the strength and truth of its life. On the one hand, the traditional religion is revered, on the other, rejected; outwardly, its stability is unimpaired; inwardly, it is convulsed with the throes of upheaval. In most countries Christianity still, to all appearance, maintains its old position, and the political authorities are usually ready to lend their support to the ecclesiastical. But over and above such formal recognition, Christianity still remains to countless souls an anchorage in the storms of life and a comfort in its trials; it is still a prolific source of self-sacrificing love and loyal devotion to duty; it still finds many who are ready to live and die in its service.

But despite all its reputation and influence, Christianity is being assailed by a passionate movement of protest which is growing in intensity and carrying all before it. It is not the tame and timid doubt which all ages know so well, not a mere failure on the part of individuals to live up to the heroic mood which religion requires of them. No! The antagonism that meets it to-day goes much deeper and is vastly more dangerous. Unbelief was once confined to the few, and those chiefly in the upper strata of society; to-day it lays hold on large masses of people, plunging them now into dull in-

difference, now into a passion of iconoclastic hate. Figures prove conclusively that the interest in church services and observances is constantly decreasing and that the faithful are rapidly becoming a minority. In our great cities — in Germany, at least — every attack or even aspersion on Christianity meets with rapturous applause. Is such treatment of religion — the religion we ourselves profess — a natural and normal occurrence, and can we find any parallel to it outside of Christianity?

Unbelief, moreover, is no longer directed merely to particular features and aspects of Christian thought. It has extended over the whole area, so that Christianity itself is called in question and not merely certain of its dogmas and institutions. Again, this unbelief, abandoning its old defensive attitude, has become more and more aggressive in character. It marshals its several forces in close array and moves them forward together in battle-line. It is not content with being merely tolerated: it longs to rule. It organises its adherents and confronts Christianity with big constructive programmes. In this respect the monistic movement is an important sign of the times. But how could such a union of forces take place at all unless, away behind individual opinion, there were distinctive tendencies of civilisation actively at work, putting forward new claims, indicating new paths, and entirely reversing the whole trend of life? It is only in virtue of its at-one-ness with the spirit of the age that this movement of protest can justify its existence and indulge the hope of final victory. It stands, and feels that it stands, for a necessary renewal of life.

Thus we live in an age of transition, of struggle between opposing systems. We are forced to ask the mean-

ing of this schism, this threatened disruption of human life, and to find out where we are to look for the means of healing it. Does this mighty countermovement, — still apparently gathering force, — betoken the approaching dissolution of Christianity, the end of its power? Does it mean that our spiritual life must seek a new centre? Or does all the commotion and upheaval only point to the need of an inward renewal of Christianity? Do the convulsions of to-day denote the death-struggle of an old world-power or are they only the throes of a new birth? Can Christianity find room and value for all that is of genuine worth in the experiences and demands of our present-day development, or are they rocks on which it is destined to founder?

This is a question which not only determines the main drift of our common work but deeply affects the life and soul of each individual. A question of this kind, once clearly put, cannot without grave loss remain long unsettled: it demands a definite answer. An effective answer cannot, however, be given save when the great problem is treated not as a party matter, but as a concern of the whole human race, not with wearisome discussion of isolated detail, but as a whole and with constant reference to the real roots of the opposition we are dealing with. We may surmise that mere theoretical consideration will not suffice and that a further active development will be necessary. With the view, however, of reaching the point where we can see what direction this should take and where a vital decision of the whole man is essential, we shall do well to make a quiet survey of our present position in the order of the world's development, and to weigh its merits impartially. Let us then spare no effort to secure that the greatness of the

problem shall to some extent be reflected in the manner of our treatment. Our theme is both serious and difficult. He who fears to look at such questions frankly will do well to hold aloof from them. Mere hedging and trimming are powerless to rescue us from the present intolerable division of our spiritual forces.

A. JUSTIFICATION OF THE QUESTION

I. What is Christianity and What are its Demands?

To take a great religion with its wealth of varying forms, its complexities and oppositions, its constant interaction with the conditions of the age, and to attempt to reduce it to a simple conceptual formula, is a task which savours of the impossible and can only tend to encourage insipidity and vagueness. It is, however, quite a different matter to point out certain pervading characteristics which are common to all its various forms and thence proceed to outline a general picture that can be intelligibly grasped. Such a picture is indispensable, not only in order to mark off this religion from other religions, but also to bring out clearly its essential nature and to distinguish satisfactorily between its primary and its secondary characteristics. Thus, if we wish to set our inquiry upon a sound footing, we must first of all seek to construct a general picture of Christianity, and in doing this we shall try to proceed step by step from its more universal qualities to such as are unique and distinctive.

1. Christianity makes religion the sovereign mistress of man's life and destiny, revealing a new world other than that of his immediate environment and claiming for it his whole-hearted devotion. Religion, on this view, is no mere extra, — the embroidery of a life whose substance is already given: it is the solution of an in-

tolerable contradiction; it effects a complete reversal of all existing values. Man becomes conscious of this new world as of all things the most supreme and certain, needing no evidence from any other tribunal, but itself constituting the tribunal before which everything else must justify itself. God is not viewed from the standpoint of the world, but the world from the standpoint of God. This break with the immediate environment and transference to a new centre was natural to the declining days of the ancient world, — to a period which had fallen out with the existing condition of things, finding there no worthy aim, cherishing no hope of improvement, and thus ready to welcome the revelation of a new world, the disclosure of a fresh spring of life. The revolution effected by Christianity must, from this point of view, have appeared as the fulfilment of an irresistible demand.

2. Christianity is a religion of the spirit, that is to say, it finds its new world in a supra-sensible invisible kingdom. It believes in a purely spiritual God as the source and sustainer of all reality, so that the renewal of life which it demands is pre-eminently spiritual in kind. Nature, as the creation of God, revealing His splendour through all her works and ways and praising Him with a thousand tongues, has to subserve the aims of spirit. Thus the miracles which attend the birth of Christianity cause no offence whatsoever. This exaltation of the spirit above the visible world was in the first instance the achievement of Judaism, won through much storm and stress; but Greece also was gradually led by the discipline of experience to abandon the sense-world which she had loved so singly and transfigured with all the glories of her art, and to take refuge in an inward life which transcended the world. The history of her

philosophy shows very clearly the gradual shifting of life's centre from the visible to an invisible world. What a gulf there is, what a change in life, between the days of the early Greek philosophy with its crude, bold animism, and its final stages as represented by Plotinus with whom everything visible was a mere allegory of an invisible order! Christianity, however, did not merely take up a movement which was already stirring in the ancient world; it carried it on to a further stage of development. That antiquity had by no means freed its conception of the Godhead from a tincture of naturalism, — from an "earthy residuum," — is sufficiently attested by the fact that even its closing epoch could regard the sun, *sol invictus*, as the supreme manifestation of the Godhead. A relic of naturalism also remained in its conception of moral activity, particularly in its manner of conceiving the moral motive. It was Christianity that first weeded out all this alien admixture and made pure spirituality completely supreme over the world. Thus more than any other religion it is the religion of the absolute spirit.

3. Christianity is a religion of redemption, not a religion of law; that is to say, it makes the critical turning-point, the winning of the new world, depend not on man's resolve or exertions, but on divine grace meeting him and lifting him upwards, grace that does not merely second his own effort, but implants within him fresh springs of action and makes his relationship to God the source of a new life, a new creature. For man as we find him has wandered too far from goodness and become too weak in spiritual capacity to be capable of bringing about his own conversion; all his hope of salvation depends on God and from Him must he receive every-

thing. Thus deep humility and joyous gratitude become, as it were, pillars of the new life; but they are genuine only when they are the result of a great upheaval and an inward transformation. This state of mind was natural to the condition of the age which witnessed the rise of Christianity. Even the educated man felt sorely oppressed by the contradictions of existence, and his very soul was divided within him. In particular, he felt the burden of the contradiction between a refined sensuality and a spirituality which, though highly developed, was yet inert and ineffective. Thus he found himself in thrall to mysterious powers, which he despised but could not shake off. There ensued a contempt for mankind which left only one possible alternative: either complete despair, abandonment of all ideals, or hope of supernatural aid, of redemption through the grace of God.

4. The redemption which Christianity promises is ethical, not intellectual, in kind. It conceives its task very differently from the Indian religions: its object is not to transplant men from the world of deceitful sense into that of true Being, to lead them from a realm of distraction and perishableness into changeless unity: its main problem is concerned rather with the struggle between good and evil. It finds that the world which God created good has through its own act fallen into evil and is now impregnated with evil. Only divine love can free it from its present corruption, effecting the freedom through an act of deliverance. For it opens up a kingdom of the children of God, where all hearts beat in unison, all discord ceases, and purest bliss is attained. In virtue of this new kingdom the world gains a new value; it is to be transfigured, not shunned.

Thus there is no repudiation of the world in itself, but only of its present condition: the No is not final, but only the gateway to a triumphant Yes.

On this view the instrument of conversion is not a miraculous illumination, in which illusions fall away suddenly like scales from before the eyes, but a total change of disposition, a primæval uprush of new life. All human action rests upon divine deed and is in fact impossible without it. There is a stern refusal to admit any capacity in man to achieve anything in his own strength. But, nevertheless, that which constitutes the very kernel of reality is not some process which follows fixed inevitable laws: it is rather free will and free action. The world's history fulfils itself in great deeds; this indeed is what transmutes it from a mere process into a genuine history. And inasmuch as these deeds are interconnected, and unite in mutual interplay to form a complete whole, reality becomes transformed into an ethical drama. This drama, moreover, extends its action right into the soul of the individual, which has its own private struggles to undergo, its own experiences of renewal; thus alone does each soul acquire a distinctive history of its own. It was Christianity that first made this history possible. Otherwise it could never have degraded all outward events into mere secondary trifles in comparison with care for the soul, — even as Jesus himself said: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

The fundamentally ethical character of Christianity brings with it yet further developments. It secures for the first time the superiority of spirit to nature, no matter how refined the conception of nature may be. The experience of the race shows clearly that wherever the

ethical character of life has been in any way weakened, the superiority of spirit has at once become matter of question. But the value attached to this ethical character gives to man, as a being capable of personal decision and independent action, a pre-eminent position in the universe: it lifts him far above all nature. This fundamental conviction, moreover, has a further effect in determining the relation between man and man: it tends to subordinate differences of actual achievement to the one problem which is common to men *qua* men. From the equality of all men before God there has grown up the idea of their equal value one with another, and the emphasis laid on truth of disposition as more important than all greatness of outward achievement means that man is for ever freed from the tyranny of fate.

Not only does the ethical problem thus become central for the whole life; it gives it a general character which is quite distinctive. Life becomes pre-eminently a relationship of the soul, as it concentrates itself into unity, with the Godhead realised as living and present; man communes with God, as an "I" with a "Thou"; and just as life acquires now for the first time a purely spiritual freedom and complete inwardness, so also it assumes a more distinctly personal as opposed to an impersonal character, and thereby gains immeasurably in spiritual depth and warmth, a warmth which infuses the whole outlook on the world and animates all our conceptions of it. But if in this respect Christianity made a decided advance upon antiquity, it was yet only natural in view of the condition and demands of the age that it should give the religious problem an ethical trend. For the deep dissatisfaction which at that time pervaded all more seriously minded people had gradually

intensified into a torturing sense of guilt. Dread of mysterious powers and burdensome responsibilities was continually gathering force, while at the same time there was growing up a longing, nay a passionate craving, for atonement and justification, for reinstatement in a condition of innocence and goodness. This was congenial soil for the gospel of ethical redemption which Christianity offered. The strict adherence to this ethical character must have given it in its early days an enormous advantage over all other competitors.

5. But though all this brings out the peculiar and distinctive character of Christianity, yet it only serves as outline and introduction to that which constitutes its main content and has given it its world-wide power. There is a deep rift, — for this is how the problem has defined itself, — between God and man. Man's self-will has renounced God and asserted itself against Him. Since this hostility has been productive of his greatest misery, the restoration of harmony, at-one-ment with God, has become the question of questions, — a question, however, which can receive its solution only through divine love and grace. The precise method of this solution is the matter that now concerns us: theoretical considerations will not give it to us; we must look for it in the actual facts. Now Christianity offers us at this crucial point two sets of facts, one of which lies wholly within the sphere of human experience, while the other opens up considerations of a metaphysical and cosmical character. The former consists of Jesus' proclamation that the kingdom of God is come and that men are God's children; the latter is the incarnation of God in Christ Jesus for the redemption of mankind. In the history of Christianity these two sets of facts have been woven

together and used for a common end, but the more important place has been given to the Incarnation. The lifework of Jesus is affiliated with the Incarnation, not so much through the detail of his actual life-history as through his death, so that his death has seemed to be more potent in its influence than all the activity of his life (*Christi mors potentior quam vita*).

The idea of God becoming man had an irresistible fascination for those times. It seemed the only possible solution of a conflict which had become intolerable. The sanctity of the moral order had been most seriously violated through man's sin, — sin not easily to be cancelled or blotted out, but serious enough to require a very complete atonement. As it is impossible for man to provide such atonement from his own resources, God alone can bring help. Yet man must somehow contribute his share: the help cannot come to him from outside as something completely alien. There remains then no other way than that God should descend among men, take on human form, become genuine man; that thus in his redeeming love he may take upon himself the guilt for which he is in no way responsible and offer the necessary atonement by his sacrifice in our stead. Only so does it seem possible for man to regain access to God. God is no longer wroth with our sin but has reopened the fountain of His grace. In no other way could love and justice, gentleness and earnestness be completely reconciled. Justice is satisfied and the majesty of the law vindicated, but love retains supremacy, and thus in the end Christianity declares itself as the religion of an all-triumphing love.

It is natural, therefore, that the union of God and man in one person, and the redemption thus effected, should

become the central dogma of Christianity. All its other distinctive dogmas, such as the Trinity, the miraculous birth, the bodily resurrection, the ascension, and so forth, are merely inevitable corollaries. There is something exceedingly logical in the development of these dogmas. There is no stopping midway; he who wishes to retain one must accept the others.

In this way the idea of mediation which had so great a hold upon that period received its most complete expression. It was an idea which had its origin in the sharp distinction, — then so strongly upheld, — between God and man. The Godhead could not be raised too high above the corruption of the world and the foulness of man; it could not enter into direct touch with this lower sphere. If a connexion were desired, there must be between-grades, there must be mediation; and this could not be more thoroughly and effectively realised than in the form of the God-man uniting both natures in his own person.

At a later stage of our enquiry we shall have to criticise this doctrine under various aspects, but first and foremost we must do justice to the profound influence it has exerted over mankind. Here we have a deed, cosmic in its reach, taking shape as a historical event. This particular piece of history thus acquired a metaphysical character and linked itself with the ultimate depths of reality. Life, by participating in these depths, gained a fixity which was proof against all doubt. For if the Godhead had appeared in flesh and blood among us, who could doubt any more? Who needed to probe any deeper as to whether the salvation thus offered was sufficient? Human nature, through its union with the Godhead, became lifted up with it to the highest

nobility; all pettiness, need, and guilt fell away from it; even death itself lost all power over it. And men owed all this grandeur and blessedness to saving love which shrank neither from the most bitter suffering nor from the darkness of death.

A conception of life which united thus closely human and divine, time and eternity, the visible and the invisible world, might easily have lost itself in some remote intangible Beyond. But this danger was steadily counteracted by the influence of Jesus' personality and work. For here everything tended towards spiritual warmth and plain humanity. The Christian conviction of love as a world-ruling power was embodied in a personality which in its union of childlike simplicity with heroic greatness, outward poverty with inward loftiness, tenderest spirituality with world-compelling power, youthful joyousness with impressive seriousness, has made a deep and lasting impression upon humanity and stands out clear and vivid in the minds of all Christian believers. What a different picture this is in its vitality and fulness, from that of the Eastern Asiatic sages in their tranquil goodness and meditative composure! To this must be added the tragic fate of Jesus, stirring human feeling to the most opposite emotions, from irrepressible grief to assured and triumphant joy. At the same time the belief that in him God had become incarnate placed him, with his life and sufferings, on quite another level from that of any merely human personality however distinguished it might be. In the light of that larger context his life became the ideal type of all human life; all his individual characteristics acquired an exemplary significance, and it became possible that round the struggle, sorrows, and

triumphs of this one personality there should grow up an emotional cult which was yet clear from any charge of idolatry.

Thus these two sets of facts have combined to give Christianity its distinctive form. The outstanding feature which distinguishes it from all other religions is that here a historical occurrence, falling within the cognisance of our own experience, has at the same time a metaphysical and cosmical significance: history and metaphysics are inseparably blended. Even though ecclesiastical dogma may be exclusively concerned with cosmic truth and may disregard the more familiar detail of the life of Jesus, yet this latter has continually exercised an invigorating rejuvenating power over Christian life, and enabled it to feel its way back from all the complexity of human conditions to a plain straightforward simplicity, and from all dependence on externals to a pure inwardness. The Christian life has always been able to draw its inspiration from

> " Der reinen reichen Quelle,
> Die nun dorther sich ergiesset,
> Überflüssig, ewig helle
> Rings durch alle Welten fliesset." [1] (*Goethe*)

6. The Christian dispensation is regarded as purely a gift from God to man. Man's function in regard to it is merely receptive, and the attempt to make life's great turning-points depend on him is most strongly deprecated. But once God's kingdom has been firmly established in the human soul, then the collective effort

[1] That fountain ever pure, abundant,
Whose source is hid from mortal sight,
Circling through the worlds unnumbered
Radiant with eternal light.

of mankind is called upon to hold fast the truth that has been revealed, to proclaim it far and wide and to make it fully effective through the whole field of human relationships. This task is rendered peculiarly difficult by the fact that, according to Christian conviction, humanity is far from yielding easily to the divine revelation; on the contrary, it offers a tough resistance, so that Christianity, despite all its inner superiority, has to struggle unceasingly. Thus arises the necessity for a special society to uphold the Christian ideal in the face of all hindrances and attacks. The religious community, the Church, as the protectress and champion of sacred things, becomes a main article of Christian belief. Over against man's external needs, the things that are necessary to his natural and social self-preservation, it holds before him, effectively present to his consciousness, an essentially higher existence, a life eternal, for which it claims his energies and his heart. Inasmuch as the Church is guided by the spirit of God, man, in virtue of his connexion with it, may feel himself to be a co-worker in the kingdom of God. But true though it be that earthly life thus becomes vested with a serious task, the truth only holds when that life is viewed in the light of a supra-sensuous world. And thus, too, it comes about that man's hopes and strivings never find satisfaction in the world that now is. A deep longing compels him to reach forward beyond its imperfections to a state of perfection which he experiences beforehand in the joys of anticipation, a state in which evil is completely vanquished and doubt is altogether cancelled. This transcendence of the present world and expectation of a new world is an essential feature of Christianity.

When we survey the gradual steps by which Chris-

tianity has unfolded itself to us and seek to summarise what we have seen of its originality and power, we are forced to admit unreservedly that it holds a pre-eminent and even unique position. We find universal and particular characteristics working effectively together and combining to form a completed whole. The universal element gives comprehensiveness and breadth; the particular, steadiness and concentration. The purpose of the whole system is in no wise limited to merely interpreting, elucidating, and improving a world already given; it is not a system of mere doctrines and concepts, but it brings a fresh development of reality; it unlocks a stream of hitherto unexplored fact. Thus it has not merely given man this or that new outlook, not merely carried on to a further stage of development powers that were already existing, but it has renewed him in the whole of his being and lifted him on to a new level. Christianity, being thus constituted, may look for verification in the first instance to its achievements alone, and does not need to found its assertions on universal truths of the reason. Having created a thought-world out of its own resources, it must proceed to uphold it without help from outside, and it is proud of this independence. We may even assert that by basing reality on man's free will and act, it has an unavoidable element of irrationality; it can never be compressed into logical formulas, though its irrationality is indeed something very different from mere unreason. Thus Christianity develops a special organ in man for the perception of its truths. Over against knowledge it puts faith, a concept in which the negative element is more obvious than the positive, while its closer definition offers the very greatest difficulty.

As regards content, the main thing in Christianity is the creation of a purely inward world formed out of the relationship of spirit to spirit, of personality to personality. With the creation of this world Christianity transcends everything that has been effected by natural and social self-preservation and every other kind of civilising agency. For the first time it gives reality a depth in which it rests secure, and it reduces that which previously constituted man's whole world to a mere part of it and even then only an external part. It is a grave misunderstanding when the new world of Christianity is represented as being mainly an "other world," whereas it is rather meant to constitute the firm basis of all life. It does indeed transcend the sphere of sense-experience, failing to find there the goal of its striving, but this transcendence it possesses from the outset, and the eternity which it proclaims is already present and effective even here.

Closely connected with this achievement of pure and independent inwardness is the extraordinary comprehensiveness of Christianity, its power of assimilating the oppositions of human life and transcending them without in any way weakening them, oppositions such as those of human and divine, time and eternity, joy and pain, worldliness and childlike simplicity, peaceful repose of heart and tremendous fervour when at conflict with the world. It is precisely this power of transcending oppositions which gives Christianity so much inward breadth and depth, and makes it into an organised whole of reality. Measured against such profundity, all other religions may well seem superficial.

This assimilation and transcendence of contrasts is especially conspicuous in the relation of Christianity to

the problem of optimism and pessimism. Christianity is indeed very far from any immediate affirmation of life's good. Not only has its tenderness of soul made men more sensible to suffering, but the emphasis it lays upon sin has actually heightened the suffering and intensified the pain. A light-headed attitude is out of the question. But though suffering is thus assimilated and made an intimate portion of the life of Christianity, yet it is always as the road along which we press to a triumphant Yea, to a state of perfection and blessedness, so that the sufferers can be extolled as blessed. Suffering indeed becomes consecrated by the fact that God Himself shares in all its bitterness and is peculiarly near to the soul that suffers. Therefore suffering, though spiritually transcended, is not abolished, but remains as an integral part of life, with the function of constantly leading it back upon its own depths. Since, however, Christianity came to man in the form of glad tidings (εὐαγγέλιον), its fundamental note is in last resort one of joy, though a joy which has gone through life's needs and struggles and come out victorious. Thus a spirituality at once radical, militant, and triumphant, binds the Christian world together. Light in darkness, brave advance in the face of a hostile world, — this is its sign and seal. "That is spiritual power, which rules amid foes and is strong in all oppression. And what does this mean but that strength is perfected in weakness, and that I can make all things minister to my salvation, so that cross and death are forced to serve me and work with me for the saving of the soul" (Luther).

All the gain that accrues to life from such a deepening and renewing process must also belong fully to each individual human being. The great facts of salvation

are true for him too. As an object of divine love and sorrow he can never more be lonely and forsaken; his doings can never again be unheeded and ignored. And once lifted on this tide of infinite love, the separate sections of society can no longer live side by side without touching each other as is otherwise inevitable: no longer are they separated by rigid class-barriers and indifference to each other's welfare. The walls of partition break down, and therewith a new life opens out, a life of sympathetic co-operation and mutual understanding, free from all taint of narrow egoism. Justice, moreover, can no longer keep its old position as controller of life and action. For justice measures reward by service rendered and gives unto each man according to his deserts, lifting the strong and depressing the weak; whereas now man is saved from his bitter need and called into infinite blessedness quite without any merit of his own. And as divine love does not stop to weigh and measure, so man also in his relations with his fellow-man must show an unmeasured love, without any question of merit or reward.

That Christianity, with all its tenderness of soul, yet shows no lack of outwardly directed energy, and that it has vitally altered the whole condition of the human race, is the incontrovertible testimony of history. In the closing decades of antiquity, particularly from the beginning of the third century, Christianity afforded a firm anchorage to a weary and hopeless humanity, inspiring it with fresh courage for the tasks of life. It was the spiritual moulder and educator of new nations; in the golden age of mediævalism it constructed a comprehensive all-inclusive life-synthesis, and in modern times it has kept alive a spiritual depth combined with

high ethical aims in face of a civilisation of quite other tendencies, thus effectively supplementing its deficiencies. Even on the plane of history, then, Christianity is an impressive actuality which has penetrated the whole texture of human society no less than it has sunk into the deepest recesses of the human soul, thereby acquiring a confident superiority to all changes of mood and opinion.

While all this is true, we yet cannot deny that the history of Christianity, as viewed from outside, is often far from edifying. We hear of conflicts between Church and State, disputes within individual churches as also between one church and another, of inquisitions and heresy-hunts, of ambition, self-interest, and hypocrisy. The whole may well seem to be the veriest caricature of Christianity, and we can easily understand the harsh judgment which could fall from the lips of even a man like Goethe: "The whole history of the Church is a mish-mash of error and violence." And yet such judgments are unjust. For they take into consideration outward manifestations only and ignore what is transpiring within. Thus they fail to appreciate the anchorage and peace that Christianity has afforded to many a soul, the strength and joy which it has inspired amid the hindrances and exigencies of human life. They fail to realise how it has opened up the depths of soul-life and helped to bring men spiritually nearer to each other. How much all this has meant and how fertile a source of purest inspiration it has proved, is clearly and strikingly shown in Christian art. Sublime cathedrals and inspired pictures, religious poetry and religious music, all combine to show that Christianity has not merely touched men on the outside or been

imposed upon them from without, but that it has won the allegiance of their souls, and secured a service which was the outcome of a full and unbiassed conviction. Thus despite all obscuration and disfigurement, — inevitable under human conditions, — Christianity has always maintained its position as a sovereign life-power, the upholder of a new world, a mistress of souls, and thence of all things human.

II. What Resistance does Christianity encounter To-day?

Generations, nations, and epochs came and went; new conditions dawned, new problems arose; and still Christianity kept its old supremacy, often by a process of adroit adjustment. It seemed like a tower which no storm could touch because it was founded upon a rock. But even Christianity has now come to a point where it is forced into a position of defence and its foundations are shaken. Let us see how this has come about and how it is to be explained.

Christianity did not approach man with mere theories about the world: it introduced him into a great realm of fact, transcending alike all argument and all the caprice of varying moods. This does not mean, however, that Christianity possesses for all time the compelling force and authority of its early days. The facts of Christianity are of the spiritual order; they cannot be imposed upon man by compulsion from without; they require the seeing eye and the attentive, inclining disposition. Man's desire must go out to meet them. Life must resolve itself into a question before religion can promise the answer. But, as time goes on, other

problems may attract men more strongly and divert their attention into other channels; and thus religion may fall into the background, becoming less convincing and more accessible to doubt.

The passage of time, moreover, may affect not merely our relation to the facts, but also the position which these facts occupy in the whole scheme of life. The fact-world which lies at the base of a religion like Christianity is not content to be just one among others, but claims a place of supreme importance and authority. Everything else in life must be interpreted and appraised with reference to this new standard, must be viewed in the light of it, and must subserve the aims it imposes. This demand created much difficulty from the very outset, and Christianity had some hard battles to fight in support of it. But it held to its point, and in the zenith of the Middle Ages had succeeded in evolving an organisation which brought every department of life under its sway and made religion the paramount force in society. As time went on, however, we find new facts asserting themselves, — facts which do not fit in easily with the religious scheme of life and are indeed essentially opposed to it. This may not be very serious so long as the new development is merely sporadic and does not obtrude itself into the foreground of life. But in proportion as it becomes more unified and independent, it reveals itself ever more clearly as the opponent of the traditional order. A conflict arises between one world of thought and another; the unity of life is broken up, and that which hitherto exercised an uninterrupted lordship is now made accountable to another tribunal. An inward change is thereby encouraged. Naïve acceptance gives place to an attitude of criticism. Man looks at things more

keenly, puts questions which he never used to think of, discovers contradictions where hitherto he has seen nothing but complementary truths. In short, the very answer that seemed so convincing now becomes itself the question.

In Christianity this process assumes a distinctive form and is accentuated by the fact that the very nucleus of Christianity is the blending of an essentially historical fact with a metaphysical transaction reaching into the Eternal. This blending was to constitute the central and dominating point of all the world's procedure. Now it is a question whether such a union of the historical and the eternal can permanently hold. Will it not weaken and dissolve as life goes forward and ideas widen out? Will not the mere historic fact prove unequal to sustaining the whole fabric of the spiritual world? These are questions which await the verdict of the world's experience, but the verdict so far seems to be against the permanence of such a union.

The ferment of change and evolution which began working at the dawn of our modern period seemed as though it could find full room for its activity inside the borders of Christianity, without in any way endangering its supremacy. The case was altered, however, when once life as a whole struck out along new lines which surely, though slowly, proved hostile to the claims of Christianity. It is precisely this change of orientation which gives the modern period its distinctive character and marks it off from the old position. We shall presently have to consider its distinguishing features more closely; here we can only indicate two points in which the main drift of life has been reversed.

Christianity framed its world in direct antagonism

to the world of sense-immediacy, — drawing, indeed, a good part of its power from the decisive breach which it effected between the two. Our modern life, however, attaches great and increasing importance to the world of sense-immediacy, bestowing more and more energy upon it and making it, to an ever greater extent, the centre of all activity. This movement has passed through several stages. First there was the attempt to overcome the old opposition of God and world by seeking the divine element within the world and regarding all its vitality and beauty as a reflex of divine splendour. This is panentheism, the theory which dominates all the creative art of the Renaissance. Then little by little Divinity laid aside its transcendent majesty and became so intimately blent with the world that the two melted into one single reality. Thus was it in the pantheism which inspired the creative activity of great poets and thinkers, and constituted a mighty incentive towards making the world more coherent and discovering more order in it, more beauty, and a life more distinctively its own. At first, pantheism saw the world in God; at a later stage it was rather God in the world. Finally, however, everything that postulates an inner unity underlying the manifoldness of the external world was expelled as a pure freak of human fancy, and all happenings were reduced to a mere juxtaposition of separate elements. Thus it was in positivism and agnosticism which completely satisfy all technical and scientific needs. Obviously, it is not mere opinions and theoretical expositions but rather actual work achieved and actual changes in the mode of life that lend more and more substance to the immediate sense-world and make it man's spiritual as well as his bodily home.

But there is another change characteristic of our modern world which touches the inner constitution of life still more deeply, — the change, that is, in the inner relationship of man to the world. The older thought regarded him as close-knit with the great reality; the microcosm depended wholly on the macrocosm; the life of the universe was immediately present in man, so that he could unhesitatingly regard his own experience as an expression or copy of that life. Christianity, with its development of a transcendent, self-immediate inwardness, was already working towards a breaking-up of this connexion; but it was left for our modern period, with its emphasis on personality and its intense self-consciousness, to give full effect to the view that mankind's first study is man, and that life's main movement is not from the universe to man, but from man to the universe. At the same time it becomes evident that the world does not simply bestow itself on man without effort on his part. On the contrary, he must carve out a path to it and build it up by his own activity. This spiritual effort, and, in particular, the activity of thought become the pillar of all reality. It is to this, and not to the impressions of sense, that we must look for assurance of actuality. Thus our relationship to all that is presented to us and that demands our recognition is no longer naïve but critical, for everything must now justify itself before the tribunal of our thought-activity and stand its scrutiny. This will especially affect our relationship to history, precisely that relationship which is of the utmost importance to Christianity. For henceforth it is no longer possible to accept comfortably and in good faith all that tradition bequeaths to us. We demand exact verification, and our keener scrutiny may

pronounce much to be false, or at least uncertain, which formerly never gave rise to a shadow of doubt. Moreover it becomes a very urgent question whether a system which answered the requirements of one particular period be capable of extending its usefulness beyond the limits of that period and becoming universal. May it not gradually lose its lustre and decline in power?

These inner changes which take place do not at first direct themselves against religion; they leave it for the moment completely unmolested. But the whole change of mental attitude which they initiate must in last resort involve religion also, and grave changes in its form may prove to be inevitable inasmuch as they are merely the logical consequences of indisputable truths. The movement of revolt gains irresistible impetus precisely from the fact that it does not contest mere single results, but revolutionises rather the whole mental attitude. Its influence permeates the age, acting as a powerful, though for the most part hidden, leaven, and no sharer in the spiritual work of the time can possibly remain unaffected by it.

The anti-Christian movement, however, starts with the peculiarly Christian characteristics, and thence extends its attack gradually to the more general truths. We must therefore run through the stages we have noted above in reversed order.

1. We find even within the confines of Christianity a hot conflict as to the position of the Church and its claim to dominate man's whole life. Many factors contributed to this result. In the first place, the State from the very outset never willingly accorded the required submission. Throughout the Middle Ages it continued to fight for its independence, and grew more convinced

of the justice of its cause in proportion as it became in modern times a civilisation-centre, invested as such with spiritual responsibilities which it fulfilled quite independently of religious aims. There was also a strained relation from the very outset between the Church and the individual. The spontaneous inward life of the individual soul might well receive a check when once the Church became the sole depositary of truth and the moral conscience of mankind; and the problem grew acute so soon as the fresher, more courageous outlook which marked the dawn of the modern era made the individual more conscious of his independence and value. Finally even the spiritual life itself was endangered by the domination of the Church, and this in two ways: religiously, inasmuch as the Church stepped in between God and the soul and claimed for itself the reverence due to God alone; and morally, inasmuch as work for the Church, devotion, ceremonies, and sacrifice were apt to make straightforward moral action seem merely a secondary matter. In fact, the aims of the Church might even seem to justify a course of action which contravened the moral order.

All these different lines of resistance were welded together by the Reformation and united in a common activity. Indeed the significance of the Reformation for the world lies not so much in the change of doctrine which it effected, as in the change of life, in the stronger emphasis laid on the ethical core of Christianity in all its personal immediacy, and in the more effectual development of the immediate relationship between the soul and God. But at the same time the Reformation marked a breaking-up of the old system and an abandonment of an all-embracing life-unity. It is good

as a beginning, wrong when it claims to have said the last word.

Criticism of the position of the Church, however, could not go far without involving an examination of her historic claim; and this soon revealed much uncertainty on fundamental points which Christians regarded as impregnable. It became clear once and for all to every unprejudiced mind that the Church had won her supremacy gradually, not possessed it from the outset; and her claim to be divinely instituted was particularly open to doubt. It became increasingly obvious that the words of Jesus on which she rests that claim were handed down by a none too authentic tradition, and may very probably have been attributed to Jesus under the influence of the Church herself as she grew in power, so that her claim to supremacy would really rest on evidence supplied by herself alone. The discovery of this circle in the chain of proof destroys, however, all its power. Possibly refuge will be sought in the frivolous view that faith is superior even to history, *i.e.* that historical facts may be denied or altered if the interest of the Church require it.

2. But the attack on the position of the Church may very possibly leave the central dogma of Christianity, — the dogma of the Incarnation, — wholly unmolested. The Reformers, indeed, championed this quite as resolutely as the early Church had done. But this dogma also is beginning to appear in a very different light under the influence of historical research. We see now that it did not spring into being full-grown, but developed gradually, though at a very early date, and that the ideas and needs peculiar to the age played a large part in its development. A comparison of that age with

our own makes us realise very vividly what a change the centuries have wrought in our attitude to this problem and how diametrically opposed is much of our modern thought to a view which then gave no offence and seemed even indispensable.

The doctrine which teaches that God, at one particular point of history, assumes a human form, — that a person is at once very God and very man, — implies conceptions of God and of man which are and must be repellent not only to the scientific spirit of the modern man, but also to his religious conviction. Our conceptions of the Godhead have grown and widened, whereas we find man to be so limited, conditioned, and confined in many ways that the direct union of his being with God's might well seem to us an unendurable supposition. The meeting of Godhead and manhood in one person, moreover, — of two natures in one life, — cannot be more closely defined without a destruction of the balance between the two and the suppression or annihilation of the one factor by the other. Either the "very God" destroys the "very man," and reduces the manhood to a mere semblance, or the "very man" destroys the "very God" and the Godhead is understood as merely an exalted humanity. The Church could of course decree that the two natures were one, but it did not thereby make the doctrine conceivable, or invest it with any vital power. Even such as hold aloof from all ultimate questions can easily see that a human life invested with the consciousness of divine nature and dignity could never fully share the sorrows and needs of human existence. It would know nothing of man's heaviest burden, his groping and wandering, his doubt and uncertainty, and the way in which all his doings seem to be swallowed up in an

impenetrable world. A God who is perfectly certain that He will soon resume His Godhead, who at the same time knows that by descending among men and taking their sorrow upon Him He can win them salvation for all time, shares the whole burden of human fate as little as does a prince the sorrows of poverty when he assumes its garb for a time and shares its pursuits.

Moreover, the conception of an atoning, vicarious suffering is repellent and distasteful to our modern minds. Not that we in any way misjudge and undervalue the depth of the ethical feeling involved in it. The fundamental ideas of the gravity of the moral law and the healing power of a selfless love, enduring and becoming more intense through stress of need and sorrow, — such ideas may well command our veneration even to-day. But it is otherwise when we come to the precise form which the problem in this connexion is constrained to take and which is thrust with enslaving force upon mankind. To our scientific, and still more to our religious temper, there is something impossible in the idea of a God who is wroth with our sins and demands His son's atoning blood before He can again become gracious to mankind. No less disturbing are the ideas of mediation and substitution. An earlier age, having made God as remote as possible from the world, found in mediation the one and only means of approaching Him. We moderns are more concerned with finding a direct relation to God, and we look upon the idea of mediation as separating rather than uniting us. We are compelled to place most insistent emphasis on the idea that the religious life can have and must have one and only one all-dominating and fundamental relation, and that therefore any worship of a mediator as divine

restricts and diminishes the worship of God. God is pushed into the background to make place for man. It is therefore the religious consciousness itself which turns against the idea of a mediator, believing that it formulates the concept of redemption, — a concept absolutely indispensable to religion, — in a manner appropriate to the needs of a particular age, but unable to give permanent satisfaction.

When further we contemplate the important part played by the sacrificial blood in this doctrine of mediation and substitution, we cannot but realise that this whole mode of presentation, penetrated though it be by a depth of real spiritual feeling, yet belongs to another, more childish and more picture-loving stage of spiritual development than that in which we find ourselves to-day after all our centuries of experience and struggle. That which once seemed a fitting expression of divine truth bids fair to become for us anthropomorphic and mythological. And no power on earth can force us to respect as religious a conception which we once perceive to be of the nature of myth.

But if this central dogma of the Incarnation fall or waver, then all the distinctive doctrines of Christianity lose their root and their connecting principle, and the whole of the second article of the creed is left without support. The humanly incarnated Son of God must have a miraculous birth free from all human incompleteness; He must descend into hell that He may influence departed spirits; He must rise again in bodily form and in bodily form ascend into heaven, thence to come again to judge the world. Each of these items was indispensable to the older thought, but what becomes of them all when once their support and foundation gives

way? Nor must we forget that these doctrines are not propositions which Christianity could take up and put down at pleasure; they are essential constituents of its most important article of faith, and belong to that which is to give man support and comfort for life and death. But do they hold this place in modern Christianity? Is it true of the Virgin Birth, for instance, or of the Descent into Hell and the Ascension?

The loosening of this complex of metaphysical assertions led modern Christianity to turn with gladness to that other assemblage of facts which, as belonging to history, is so much nearer and simpler and seemed so much less debatable. We refer to the personality and lifework of Jesus, and to his doctrine that the kingdom of heaven is at hand and that man is a child of God. The irresistible force and freshness of this preaching, its wonderful earnestness, its joyous, childlike confidence were so purely human and so free from all taint of dogma that they seemed to offer sufficient compensation for the weakening of the old metaphysical belief. It is true that here also we light upon difficulties due to historical criticism. No one to-day can doubt that the accounts of Jesus contain many later accretions, and that his picture does not show him simply as he was, but is to a large extent coloured by the belief and veneration of succeeding ages. We are indeed of opinion that even the keenest-eyed criticism cannot touch the purely human figure at the centre of the story. This, with its incomparable uniqueness and its wealth of fresh revelation, could never have been a mere after-discovery, pieced together out of broken fragments. Such a contention would betray a want of appreciation of that which really constitutes a creative personality. With justice has it been said:

"He who cannot trace in the basic synoptic account a really individual life is useless for historical research in this field" (Wendland). Let us then rejoice in the life of Jesus as a valuable possession for the human race and an inexhaustible source of genuine power and sentiment. But can his personality, — once its metaphysical foundations are shaken, — continue to hold that central, regulative, controlling position which ecclesiastical Christianity assigns to it? That position rested, after all, upon the unique relationship to God involved in the fact of belonging to the divine nature: only from this point of view can Jesus rank as the unquestioned lord and master to whom all ages must do homage. Great though he undoubtedly is even apart from such claim, yet, apart from it, the greatness is such as pertains to our common humanity, and all the new and divine life which it made manifest must be potentially within us all and may become our own possession. In this case we should no longer see in Jesus the type and standard of what all human life should be, but rather an incomparably great personality, not to be easily imitated. In any case, once regarded in this light, he can no longer, however lofty and pure his humanity, be an object of faith and be worshipped as divine. Every attempt to take refuge in compromise is wrecked on a relentless Either-Or. There is no middle term between man and God, for we do not wish to sink back into hero-cult. Thus if Jesus is not God, and Christ not the Second Person of the Trinity, then he is man, — not a man like any one of us, but still man. We may revere him as a leader, a hero, a martyr, but we cannot forthwith bind and pledge ourselves to him and yield him unconditional submission. Still less can we make him the centre of a

cult, for that would now be nothing else than an intolerable idolatry.

At the same time, however, there arises the inevitable question whether the historic substance and the human greatness, which remain when the metaphysical belief has dropped away, are strong enough to sustain a whole religious structure, and concrete enough to give support and protection against all doubts and needs and assure our human life of a new world. The historic fact had a world-significance so long as it was intimately bound up with the metaphysical belief. Can it retain such significance when once this connexion has been loosened?

3. If then the second group of facts offer no compensation for the upsetting of the first, Christianity is left without any solid foundation of fact whatsoever, and at the same time is deprived of any sure central truth to bind together all its individual convictions and give them an unshakable certainty. It may be seriously questioned whether, apart from such a central truth, a religion can have any unity at all, and even whether it can exist as an independent power. In modern times, however, we have expended much effort on the attempt to maintain a distinctively Christian thought-world in defiance of all doubts concerning its facts. Indeed, this disseverance of Christian thought from both metaphysical and historical statement has been regarded as a triumph for breadth and freedom. It has speedily become manifest, however, that even this thought-world is not exempt from attack. All the main positions have in these latter days been threatened by opposing movements, and though these seemed at first supplementary rather than antagonistic to Christianity, yet as time went on they revealed ever more clearly the opposition

that was latent in them, and finally entered upon an open and bitter conflict with the Christian faith, which is now compelled at every point to struggle for its existence.

This is particularly evident in regard to the conception and valuation of the distinctively Christian morality. The attack was directed in the first instance not against morality in general, but against the specifically Christian morality, — its soft, mild, yielding character. From the very outset there was difficulty in reconciling this morality with the existing condition of things. From the very outset the objection was urged that Christianity lacked the force and hardness required for breaking down the resistance of this hostile world, that it was indeed defenceless against evil. As a matter of fact it continually resorted to compromise and an adjustment of its ideals to worldly requirements. In modern times, however, the problem has become more acute, inasmuch as our more courageous hold on life has required a complete subjugation of the environment, a thorough mastery of its resistant elements, and has at the same time insisted on a more manly and aggressive morality. This demand has received additional force from observation of the fact that Christian morality has been influential in controlling the individual disposition rather than in transforming general conditions. Christianity was indeed rich in works of mercy, but the establishment of rational codes of justice in the social life of mankind was reserved for our modern era. This, — not Christianity, — has abolished slavery; this, — not Christianity, — has treated the social question as a matter of justice.

Indeed, even within the Christian world itself, this

morality was too soft and mild to permeate our human nature thoroughly, so that it left much that was rude and cruel wholly unchallenged. Who can contemplate wild orgies of fanaticism and bloody persecution, — the destruction of the order of Templars, for instance, or the horrors of the Inquisition in Spain and the Netherlands, — without being all too painfully conscious of a denial of Christian love? Do not those horrors present us at best with but a miserable counterfeit of it? And do we find even to-day that ecclesiastical factions are specially renowned for love and meekness? Thus it seems as though Christian love were limited to private relationships, and were not equal to grappling with universal problems.

Thus the contradiction which Christian morality has encountered in our modern world is easily explicable. But the movement of opposition soon extended its reach and began to challenge the supremacy of morality in general and even to deny it any important rôle whatsoever. The status of morality in Christianity was essentially conditioned and determined by the fact that Christianity regarded the relationship of spirit to spirit, of personality to personality, as constituting the real kernel of life. From this point of view, morality, understood as mutual self-surrender, became the soul of all reality. Here alone life seemed to find a pure self-immediacy and at the same time to glow with warm emotion and a passion of exalted joy. All other activity, all outwardly directed effort, seemed from this standpoint to belong to a cold and lifeless external world. Modern thought, however, with its searching experiences of life, has placed the kernel of action very differently: it finds genuine action only where psychical energy is in

contact with the object and the two act and react upon each other, — where activity, therefore, is taking shape in the form of work. Only by thus developing an objective character does activity free itself from vague subjectivity, win full reality, and develop a world, whereas everything that is confined purely to the soul and would fain work direct from soul to soul is in danger of becoming a mere shadow. For this school of thought feeling could be nothing more than a mere forerunner or echo of action: it could not possess an independent value. Morality, on this view, sank to the level of an accessory; it became a mere concomitant effect, with no claim to interfere in the serious shaping of the life-process. The main currents of modern life meet in this conviction. Not only is naturalism prone to regard morality as something secondary and subsidiary to other ends, but modern intellectualism, such as that of Hegel, looks upon it as something which refers only to the position of the individual in relation to the groundwork of events, so that it can never bring forth a kingdom of its own, an independent reality. In neither case is there any room for free decision and personal action such as morality demands. The whole of reality is converted, as it were, into a mere succession of events.

This movement in the direction of greater objectivity gave birth to vast social systems which are guided solely by their own necessities, claim all man's energy on their behalf, and repudiate all direct reference to moral aims as a source of confusion and perversion, a hindrance to free development of faculty and individual expression. Such organisations we find in modern science, modern art, modern economics. These could not have developed as they have done save in complete independence

of morals. Morality is thus apt to seem a mere private individual concern, which has no importance for the larger world. But it is a question whether, when thus degraded, it can still constitute the soul of life even for the individual himself. And how can moral purification and salvation continue any longer to be the chief and all-absorbing problem? Christianity cannot possibly meet with real understanding and appreciation when even the question which it is its glory to answer is no longer put to it.

Nor is it morality alone that is pushed from centre to periphery. It is also that personal shaping of life which involves constant reference of one life-unity to another. The main trend of modern movements is against the casting of life in a personal mould, which seems too narrow and petty to comprehend genuine life in all its fulness, and too apt to lead to disfigurement and over-subjectivity. From this point of view the warmth and inwardness of personal life appears as a mere fluctuation of emotional sentiment. It cannot furnish a starting-point whence we may proceed to outline the fundamental concepts of reality, nor can the concept of the personality of God be regarded any longer as a symbol of ultimate truth, but merely as unseemly anthropomorphism. Concepts displace and replace each other for the reason that life's centre of gravity is shifted, and that which was central in Christianity is now relegated to the surface. How hard it now becomes to understand the belief that the gain of the whole world does not compensate for loss to the soul!

4. The very idea, moreover, of a religion of redemption seems untenable in face of the changing conditions of modern life. We have seen how indispensable this

idea was in the weary decadent days of the ancient world, and how men at that time could win courage and strength for life only through a firm reliance on supernatural aid. Now, however, we have found such strength and courage within the borders of this earthly existence. The awakening and utilising of our own faculties become our main joy and incentive, and it seems almost petty and cowardly to begin by looking for outside help.

This modern consciousness of strength, moreover, receives fresh support and confirmation from certain specific changes proceeding along two different lines; firstly, from the coalition of men in both historical and social developments, and secondly, from the conviction that our existing environment is capable of modification.

So long as individuals worked merely side by side and only joined forces casually and for short periods, man's powers were confined within narrow limits and were soon broken on the resisting rock of hard fact. With the changes in modern life, however, and the help of our improved technique, individual forces have become more closely united and more intimately related. Not only have complex industrial organisations, such as the modern factory, sprung into being, but we have also seen the rise of modern science and modern administrative systems. All these, working with organised effort, have achieved incomparably greater results than individual forces, isolated as they had hitherto been, had ever been able to attain. Man's consciousness of power was thus greatly increased, and he could now embark cheerfully upon tasks which were formerly quite beyond him. This whole movement is further strengthened by a new understanding of history which has its roots in modern technical industry. The separate epochs are regarded

as each contributing its quota to a coherent whole. Every genuine achievement of any special period is stored up and transmitted to the succeeding period, so that our labours might be likened to the building of a great pyramid where layer is added to layer and a use is found for even the smallest contribution. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Through the development of such co-operative work in history and society, mankind, as an industrial whole, made enormous advance. The whole could succeed where the individual failed; the ages, linked together, could effect what the moment was powerless to achieve.

With the growth of man's capacity to develop his powers, the improvement of outward conditions became likewise more possible. No longer, as in earlier times, did the world seem immutably fixed by some obscure fate or divine ordinance, so that it must be accepted just as it is with all its evils. It began to be regarded, rather, as still in the making. Great changes seemed possible. Man was no longer obliged to confine his efforts to alleviating simply the outward manifestations of poverty, sickness, and need. He felt himself empowered and commissioned to attack the evil at its roots and contribute energetically towards the progress of the world. Nor did the movement stay in the realm of mere disposition and intention; it found very real expression. The briefest glance at modern developments in medicine and social legislation is sufficient to make us conscious of a radical change in the situation of affairs and a new attitude of man towards reality. Instead of patiently resigning himself to the irrationality of existence, he courageously declares war upon it, and in the success which attends his efforts becomes inspired with an exultant

self-confidence. At the same time he learns to despise all waiting on supernatural aid. For his successes have not been due to any miraculous intervention; they have been won little by little through his own exertions, and he has the right to be proud of them. Amid the stress of such movements the idea of redemption fades altogether from his mind. It gives place ever more and more submissively to the idea of progress. Surely the expansion of power, the living of life for the sake of its own progress will supply a completely satisfactory content for existence! Over against the ethical ideal of life, with its change of heart, there grows up a dynamic ideal, which aims at an unlimited expansion of power and shapes all values and standards for itself. This growth of humanity towards a solidarity of labour, embracing all times and places, inevitably checks the growth of the God-idea. Faith in God pales before faith in humanity. Modern positivism, for instance, actually preaches the cult of humanity (*le grand être*) as a new creed. And Ludwig Feuerbach expresses this modern tendency very strikingly when he says: "God was my first thought, reason my second, man my third and last." How fares it then, under these conditions, with the kingdom of God?

5. Christianity is the religion of pure spirituality. It regards nature as the work of spirit and an instrument for the attainment of spiritual ends, — never as existing in its own right. In modern thought, on the other hand, nature has acquired an independent status. She revealed herself to the eye of science only in proportion as she drove out all soul-element and welded that which was soulless the more firmly and closely together. But this new development, which was equally well-marked in the

domain of technical achievement, held within it the germ of serious hostility to religion. This first found open expression in regard to the problem of miracles. Miracles are no mere embroidery of ecclesiastical Christianity; they are inseparably involved in its fundamental truths. To the older thought they proclaimed unmistakably the superiority of the spiritual world, but to the modern mind they present a serious stumbling-block, as violating the coherency of the cosmos. It can scarcely be denied that to-day they hinder religious conviction rather than help it.

But the new movement does not confine itself to this special point; its effects are more far-reaching. Nature with her newly won independence reacts more and more strongly upon spiritual life, is always imprisoning it within narrower limits and seeking to constitute herself the whole of reality. We are each and all of us immersed in a world of concrete actualities. There is no longer any question as to the complete dependence of psychical life on bodily conditions or the close relation of man to animal, or the hitherto neglected power of material factors in controlling the development of historical and social conditions. All this side of life now for the first time receives its due. Another influence working in the same direction is a strong desire for unity which, overleaping experience, seeks to establish the exclusive right of nature, to deny and do away with all independence of the spiritual life, and to fit all facts and events into natural moulds. It is true that, even in modern thought, there is a current of opposition to this tendency. From the very outset intellectualism makes its appearance as the opponent of naturalism. Its claim strengthened by the outburst of mental activity which we have already

noted, it takes such activity as its standing-ground, and contends with much zeal and emphasis that thought is the necessary starting-point, the primitive workshop of life, and that we do not even see nature directly as she is, but grasp her only through the medium of thought and construct her image in accordance with the laws of this thought. Certainly the thought-world is more important than the sense-world for the awakened spiritual insight. But however just this consideration may be and however fatal to crude materialism, yet it only carries real conviction when spiritual work is at a high level. Intellectualism, moreover, does not, like naturalism, make life an all-inclusive coherent whole in which every power is constrained to subserve one single task. Thus it is far inferior to naturalism in its influence on humanity as a whole and is constantly losing ground as culture becomes more and more diffused among the masses. There is only one way in which a spiritual movement can offer successful resistance to the increased influence of natural environment and its attempt to invade even the sanctuary of the inward life: it must be the unity within which the manifoldness of our human striving is focussed, and thus enabled to assert itself with unanswerable force. Such unity, however, the spiritual life of to-day cannot show us within its own sphere. If, then, man is absorbed more and more into nature and must shape his whole life on the natural pattern, certain values will fade and vanish, apart from which no religion can subsist, and Christianity least of all. It is vain to speak any more of a pure inwardness and a self-immediacy of life if all psychical life be simply the accompaniment of bodily processes or be actually produced by them. How can men be members of a spiritual brotherhood and partici-

pate directly in the life of humanity as a whole, if there be nothing more than sense-juxtaposition of elements and all contact be simply external? If all that happens be subject to the changes of time and can offer no resistance to them, what room is there for eternal truths and that personal immortality which is a main article of the Christian faith?

Moreover, the complete absorption of man into nature means the destruction not only of Christianity but likewise of every other religion. For man must in some way transcend nature in order to discover a divinity and be able to seek connexion with it. To a merely natural being all religion is but a tissue of illusions, and the only puzzle is how it could ever come into existence at all.

6. The outcome of all this is a re-assertion and confirmation of the fact which was the starting-point of our enquiry: that man has been moving closer to the world of sense-immediacy, with the result that religion has been constantly yielding ground, narrowing its sphere and thinning its content. Once it claimed to control all departments of life, but now these departments, such as law and morals, art and science, have cut adrift from its direction and sought to base themselves on a reason which dwells within man. It is in this way that a "natural" law arose, a "natural" morality, and even a "natural" religion. An age in which such a tendency is at work naturally resents the exclusively religious control of life as being intolerably narrowing. Nothing but a universal culture can satisfy the whole man, and religion, like other departments, can subsist only as an element in this culture and must take shape within it. But how can religion do this without sacrificing, or at least seriously weakening, its own distinctive character? At all

events, if it be nothing more than a fragment of a universal culture, it can never produce a new life, break with the world, and direct its hopes and aspirations, as Christianity did, to a new reality; namely, the kingdom of God. The limitations thus imposed on it must inevitably imperil its content, making it more and more tenuous.

We find an actual demonstration of this in the modern movement from an unseen to the seen world, a movement whose progress we can trace through certain well-defined stages. The first, panentheism, by regarding an æsthetic outlook as more important than moral conversion, was already taking the first step in thinning down the substance of Christianity. Pantheism changes religion still more drastically into a mere sentiment, a devotional feeling which simply accompanies the progress of civilisation and gives soul to the sense-world, but can never bring about any essential change or elevation in its character. When finally in the latest or agnostic phase we find the divine becoming inaccessibly remote, and religion merely the recognition of a dark mysterious background of which we can know nothing at all, then it needs but one short step to land us in complete and blank denial. A religion as empty as this may just as well disappear altogether. Yet when a tendency of this kind has been slowly leavening the centuries, to resist it is an extremely difficult if not wholly impossible task, at least from the modern standpoint, which puts religion from the outset at a disadvantage.

For whereas in earlier times religion was the starting-point for life and carried within itself its own convincing certainty, God being better known than His creatures (*deus notior creatura, mens corpore*), now it

has first to justify itself from the standpoint of the world, wherein it encounters serious difficulties. The reason why all affirmation is so weak and all denial so strong is that life's centre of gravity now falls outside religion instead of within it. The divine is apt to seem a mere afterthought. The very attempt to prove it may easily have a destructive effect, since it makes it depend upon some outside fact, whereas its power to convince should really reside within itself. If religion is no longer the first of all truths, it is in danger of becoming the last of all; if it has lost its immediate certainty, as it has done to-day, it may easily become more uncertain than anything else. "God is at once the easiest and the hardest to know; the first and the easiest where the path is light, the last and the hardest where the path is dark" (Leibniz).

This change of orientation in life as a whole makes itself felt also in the life of the individual. He too finds more substance and value in the world around him: it claims him ever more exclusively; it offers him so many tasks, such treasure both of work and of enjoyment, it is so diversified and interesting and fills him with such keen satisfaction that the wish to renounce it all and seek a new world may well strike him as fantastic. But in proportion as this becomes a settled habit of mind and clearly articulate in our consciousness, religion, and with it Christianity, loses its importance for civilisation and threatens to vanish altogether.

Thus at all the main points we find modern life severing itself more and more from Christianity and viewing it with hostility. Is it any wonder if these different streams of tendency finally converge and concentrate themselves against the whole Christian position? For

the older generations, Christianity was a strong rock and refuge, established to all eternity, defying the mutations of time. Now time has asserted its power over this structure also, directing an attack upon it which has been continually gathering force and slowly sapping its foundations. At first it was covert and felt only here and there, but little by little it grew bolder and extended operations over the whole area till at last the fortress seems to be undermined and the decisive moment to be at hand in which nothing can avert a complete downfall.

So, at least, think the adversaries. Perhaps their triumph is premature, perhaps wholly unwarranted. But even the unprejudiced observer is constrained to admit that Christianity no longer holds its old position. It has been driven from its status of undisputed possession and forced into an attitude of defence. In this process of defending itself it has often abandoned perilous outposts and sought to withdraw upon some essential position. From historic facts it has retreated upon ideas, from certain specified ideas upon a philosophy of life as a whole, and from all such philosophy upon the achievements of Christian ethics which nobody seemed able to dispute. But even this supposed refuge proved fallacious. It became apparent that, after all, the main ideas and valuations of Christianity were no less vigorously assailed than its facts, both historical and metaphysical, and that scarcely anywhere was the onset more violent than in the region of Christian ethics. But if it be impossible to find anywhere a point that is safe from attack, if there be no sure central truth holding together all diversity of opinion, if every stable position be drawn into the arena of discussion and debate, then

even the friend of Christianity will scarcely be able to escape a sense of insecurity. Christianity had exercised a powerful unifying influence over life and at the same time had developed a distinctive way of viewing the world and assimilating its impressions. This concentration of man's powers was particularly helpful in increasing his capacity to resist suffering and to believe and hope through the darkest days. Now, however, the cohesion of Christianity has been impaired through constant attack and even threatened with complete disruption. The experiences of life, emancipated from traditional interpretations and restraints, appeal to us with all the force of immediate impressions. But therewith all the primitive questions of human life come up again with fresh force, and the riddles of existence make their mystery felt with painful acuteness. In face of them we now seem to be weaponless and helpless.

Perhaps this is mere seeming; perhaps our resources are greater than we think. But unquestionably there is at present a complete tangle of certainties and uncertainties, and no criterion by which we can distinguish between them. Such a state of affairs is no longer tolerable and drives us inexorably back upon the question "Can we still to-day be Christians?"

III. What Reasons are there for refusing to reject Christianity?

If Christianity be breaking up as we have described, why, we might reasonably ask, should we be perturbed about it? Why not accept the situation as inevitable? Though the severance from so old and familiar a possession cannot but be painful, yet, if truth demand it, we

surely dare not shrink. The demand indeed must be unmistakable, and its content clear as day. Any doubts in regard to it would bring the whole movement to a standstill.

As a matter of fact such doubts arise. A cause of misgiving and stumbling meets us at the very outset in the fact that the disintegrating tendency of the modern movement is not limited to Christianity but reaches beyond it, attacking indeed everything that gives life a spiritual character. The more closely this movement allies itself with the world, the less room has it for religion of any kind, however "free-thinking" and "enlightened." The more exclusive its insistence on strength and efficiency, the more surely does it undermine morality. The more it breaks up all the inward ties that bind men together, the more certainly does it reduce all intellectual activity to a merely individual phenomenon, and can therefore neither understand nor tolerate the idea of science as a power that compels man and is independent of all fluctuating opinions. Are we prepared to accept these results also and hail them with enthusiasm? Is there not something self-contradictory in using spiritual work as a means of destroying all spiritual life and therewith all possibility of spiritual work?

Nor is it merely the effects of this countermovement which prove to be less simple than its protagonists imagine; the same thing applies also to its constitution. Closer investigation shows that it unites two very different tendencies. They may work together for the moment and so produce a very powerful effect, but in the long run they are bound to diverge and cross one another and even pull in opposite directions. There is in the first

place a more general movement, the tendency of our modern times to seek a broader, freer, clearer life, a life of greater independence and spiritual spontaneity. As this life extends its transforming power to one domain after another, it throws new light also on our historical inheritance and therefore makes new demands of Christianity. But possibly Christianity may be able to comply with these demands without suffering any harm, perhaps even with the result of developing her own powers all the more freely. In any case it would first be necessary to prove that an irreconcilable conflict was really in question. With the second and more specific movement it is otherwise. This is the movement of our modern life towards a merely naturalistic culture, a culture, that is, which limits all its activity to the world around us, makes this the goal of all its hopes and aspirations and rejects everything which steps beyond its boundaries. Now between a tendency of this kind and Christianity, — the religion of world-transcending inwardness, — no kind of agreement is possible. There can only be a life-and-death struggle. But as these two tendencies intersect and combine at many points, the narrower statement is wont to appropriate to itself all that is most convincing in the broader. Its greater definiteness, moreover, gives it an advantage as against the less well-defined. Thus it has been able to pose as the representative of the whole modern movement and to turn all that is strong and just in it into the service of its own flat denial of Christianity. So soon as we perceive the injustice of this proceeding and keep these two tendencies well apart, the problem of Christianity begins to appear in a new light and it might very well be shown that the keen opposition to it was really due to the

deterioration of modern life. The restriction to a naturalistic culture would then have to be examined on its own merits, and if such culture, when divested of all alien help and thrown solely on its own resources, should prove unequal to the task of comprehending and controlling human life, — should in fact prove more destructive in its effects just in proportion as it developed its own specific character, — then Christianity could regard its opposition without fear and might feel itself fully competent to dealing with such an adversary.

The first thing to do, then, is to make clear distinctions, in the light of which we shall be able to estimate the precise significance of this reactionary movement as a whole, how far it is justified in insisting upon changes, and wherein its own claim is unjust. It was the united pressure of the two streams of tendency, taken as an unanalysed whole, that imperilled Christianity. Every distinction made must tend to decrease the tension of the situation.

Let us see then how things stand as regards the content of these two thought-movements and the claim of the naturalistic culture to control life. The simplest way will be to single out some specially important points and investigate the position of both the broader and the narrower movements in regard to them, at the same time enquiring into their potentialities. Let us select as such points the attitude taken up towards the world, the valuation of human nature, and the shaping of work.

(*a*) *Attitude towards the World*

A more appreciative attitude towards the world and greater absorption in its interests, — *i.e.* in the sum-total of all man's immediate concerns, — constitute

a dominating characteristic of modern life. It is through this alone that modern science and modern art, modern politics, economics, and education have acquired their distinctive character. This is the pivot whereon hinges the whole fabric of modern civilisation with its far-reaching transformations of the whole general condition of life. It is unquestionably a far cry from this to the old Christianity, whose methods had to correspond to an age which had lost all pleasure in the world. But even here we must not forget that side by side with the depreciation of the world in its natural state, there was the disposition to exalt it in so far as it was renewed by God, so that Augustine could say that Christ came to free the world from the world. This disposition was further supported by Christian philosophy which understood the world as a self-revelation of God, and by mysticism which unified world and God. These influences have contributed in no small degree to the development of our modern valuation of the world. But even our modern era did not at first regard the world as being valuable in itself, but rather as an expression, manifestation, representation of a divine life which was its foundation and support. It was from the idea of God that the world derived both infinity and inward cohesion; it was only as reflecting the divine splendour that it became a kingdom of order and beauty. Devotion to a world so conceived did not imply any alienation from God. When Spinoza spoke of God as the "immanent cause of things," he did not mean that God works within a world already given, but rather that He continues to be Himself when working on things, and that things are not without but within a universal life.

In the early days when the modern movement was at

its spiritual zenith, the counterpart to this transcendence of God was the independent status of spiritual work as regards all that man's experience can contribute to it. Life does not draw its content from the world, but develops through contact with the world, in assimilating and subduing it. It consists, therefore, not in absorbing merely, but rather in transforming the material it receives. That is why the chief modern thinkers were so insistent in reserving for the spirit in its struggle for knowledge an original heritage or an original capacity (innate ideas, a priori, etc.). It was in this connexion that Kant wrote the words: "The understanding does not derive its laws from nature: it imposes them upon nature." Similarly the doctrine that morality is independent of all the stir and movement of the outside world was vigorously upheld: "in regard to moral laws, experience (alas!) is the mother of illusion, and it is in the highest degree reprehensible to wish to derive the laws regarding what I ought to do from that which actually is done or to limit the one by the other." Modern thought, moreover, cannot justify the high value it sets on personality and the personal life and the high hopes entertained in regard to it, save by making it an independent life-centre and allowing it to discover its own nature through grappling with the world. If personality is to comprehend the world in its embrace, must it not be superior to the world? From the personalistic point of view, the pliant adaptation to natural existence appears throughout in the light of an unbearable degradation, a shameful abasement of life.

The creative energies of modern life, likewise, assert their superiority to the world. The world is for them so much raw material, and conditions the extent of their

activity, but it is not the source whence that activity is derived. The only difference between this and the old Christian view is that Christianity regards the higher life as ours only through miraculous grace, whereas modern thought regards it as dwelling within us from the very beginning. But as on both views the processes of the spiritual life move independently of the world, their common fund of agreement is wider than their difference. It is, moreover, an open question whether our times are capable of giving clear and consistent expression to this immediate presence of a higher life in man, whether their own work and experience have not in this connexion revealed certain serious complications which require a deepening of life and therewith bring us closer to Christianity. In any case the matter is still unsettled and the modern era has no right to pose as an ultimate tribunal. At a later stage we shall have to consider the question more closely.

But not only did the world become to modern man vastly more important than it was in earlier times; it drew him with an ever stronger fascination, wound itself more closely round him, robbed him more and more utterly of his independence. Surrender to the world finally reached a point where reaction set in and the aspect of life was completely altered. Human activity became more and more engrossed with things, adapting and bending itself to their requirements; it lost more and more of its old superiority, and therewith the consciousness of superiority, till at last it reconciled itself willingly to being a mere product of the environment, a mere piece of the world's machinery. Another influence contributing to the same result was the tremendous expansion which the world was undergoing in the realm

alike of the vast and the minute. An exhaustless wealth of concrete fact was being constantly pressed home on man, till at last human strength could no longer cope with it. The power to unify things and permeate them with spiritual meaning refused to act. The spirit ceased to be an independent life-centre and seemed as though henceforth it could find salvation only in serving. This development might seem at first sight to be pure gain, the gain of a wider, more open, more unprejudiced life, an emancipation from rigid formulas, a revival of youth and plasticity free from any and every limitation. That it does involve rich gain of this kind it is indeed impossible to deny. But the gain becomes loss when this movement, instead of falling within a wider life, is intended to constitute in itself the whole of life. For with the disappearance of all independence of the spiritual life, there disappears also all possibility of reacting on things and transforming them. The soul becomes an empty vessel that looks to the environment for its whole content; it is soft wax, taking now one shape, now another, according to changes of outward conditions.

For what does the world become for man, if spiritual work be withdrawn from it? A tissue of mere relations between impervious elements, a constant flux and change, countless movements crossing and re-crossing each other, a meaningless whirl. And man is drawn into the whirl, must seek a place in it, shape his life in accordance with it, adapt himself utterly to its requirements. Much then must disappear which hitherto seemed to constitute his sure possession and give him an important status. The soul, which now becomes the mere product of her environment, must renounce all inner unity and become a mere juxtaposition of detached processes: these pro-

cesses may be joined into one bundle and act outwardly as though they were a whole, but they are not an inner whole, a whole, that is, which has comprehended the separate individual activities, infused itself into them and dwelt in them. With this break-up of the soul, values such as personality, character, inward disposition, conviction become mere empty illusions, as does also the life that counts them worthy and believes in the duty of developing them. Man is on this view nothing more than a complicated mechanism, a complex of forces, a meeting-place of actions and reactions.

But where there is no inner unity, the environment also is incapable of being welded into a whole. It remains a mere juxtaposition of separate points. There cannot be any reflection upon the world, any attempt to estimate and value it. There can be no relation between human life as a whole and reality as a whole and therefore no contradiction between the demands of the soul and the constitution of the world, and no toiling and wrestling to overcome such contradiction. But history tells us that it is precisely from such wrestling that all the decisive advances in man's progress have been won. For it was the contradiction in question which above all else elicited new powers and led men to try new paths. Plato's inspiring Ideas, Dante's richly coloured world-pictures, Kant's revolutionary Critique, — how would these have been possible had not a great soul taken upon itself to struggle for spiritual self-preservation in the teeth of all resistance, and, for the successful prosecution of its task, had changed both the aspect of the world and the purpose of life? A naturalistic culture is obliged to interpret all this, and in fact all great art, as empty illusion and gross error.

We may indeed state as a general truth that, with the complete absorption of man by his environment, much remains unintelligible which not only tended to lift him in his own esteem but has also proved its worth through radical changes wrought in the condition of life. It is unintelligible, for instance, that man's spiritual force should be able so thoroughly to transform the material received from without, — that modern science, for example, should have produced a picture of nature so totally different from that given by sense-impressions. It would also be unintelligible that man, a mere piece of a mysterious machine, should take interest in the general condition of his environment, assume responsibility for it, and feel himself driven by his conscience to battle against its evils. And yet this it is above all else which gives the social movement its impelling power.

But even assuming that there is no difficulty in understanding man's entry upon a campaign of help and progress, yet how little depth can the merely naturalistic culture allow to his activities! For as it has to deal with elements that are unalterably given and can do nothing more than change their position, it is bound to regard all hope of an inner renewal of mankind as a deceitful illusion. Yet it was this hope which inspired the activities of the great reformers not only in the religious, but also in every other domain. They were not content with just changing the position of this or that in a given state of things. They wished to open up fresh sources of activity; they sought a new, purer, and truer humanity; they fought against the artificial, external, decadent character of average civilised life; and all the time they were filled with a passionate longing and an unwavering hope for the realisation of a truer,

fresher life, all of them inspired in last resort by the conviction: "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Moreover, this inhibition of all attempt to get back to the creative sources of life is no mere article of theory; it inevitably depresses life's actual energy. For it lies at the root of that almost superstitious faith which prevails to-day in the efficacy of outward arrangements, laws, and associations; and it also accounts for the disbelief in creative deed and in man's inner capacity to rise. The naturalistic culture can seek salvation only from without.

At the same time we may not deny that the more unprejudiced abandonment to the outside world and the keener interest in its concerns have been productive of much that is new: they have made life richer, kept it from over-hasty conclusions and exerted a fruitful influence on its formation as a whole. But all this at once becomes problematic and perverse when naturalism seeks to control the whole life and stamp itself upon every part of it. There is a great difference between spirit simply finding the world more and more important and stimulating, and sinking itself altogether in the world so that it becomes entirely submerged and swallowed up by it. That the latter alternative implies an inner destruction of life would at once become obvious, were it not for the fact that the naturalistic culture has constantly supplemented its own deficiencies from other thought-worlds, and idealised its own values by bending round in an idealistic direction. It has indeed borrowed largely from the very system which it is most zealously concerned to destroy. The only reason why it has been able to command the approval of our time and even

arouse its enthusiasm is that it has been working within the old spiritual atmosphere which is still permeated with idealism. This, however, means that the naturalistic culture, in virtue of an inward dialectic, destroys itself through its own advance. For such advance must be constantly weakening and dissipating the very element which the naturalistic culture itself cannot dispense with. In proportion as it ceases to be supplemented by idealism, its limitations become more apparent; it is less able to uphold its claim as the guide of life; it has a more and more narrowing and destructive effect. But if all this be true and the naturalistic culture be really burdened with so many problems, then how can we allow it to set our standards and appoint our ends? Its uncompromising resistance to Christianity merely states the fact of an irreconcilable opposition between the two, it does not imply that the naturalistic culture is triumphant. We need not fear the contradiction of that which itself contains such contradictions.

(*b*) *The Valuation of Human Nature*

If early Christian times were prone to depreciate man and trust as little as possible to his strength, — thereby the better to exalt divine might and grace, — the modern world, on the other hand, sets a high value on human strength and greatness. It is this valuation which sustains and inspires the whole structure of modern civilisation. Capacity and achievement have each assisted the other, and thus man's confidence in himself has continually been increased.

But this exaltation of man can be understood in two ways, and can rest on two different bases. It may either be that man grows in importance because he becomes

inwardly related to creative life-forces, or again because he becomes more effective and self-confident in dealing with his immediate environment. The dawn and the zenith of modern culture were both dominated by the former conviction; the latter, however, was the controlling factor in the naturalistic culture which gained ground increasingly during the nineteenth century. The Reformation, no doubt, augmented man's powers very considerably. It infused a fresh courage into life and a more independent spirit. But it did this not through heightening man's self-confidence, but rather through the revelation of an immediate relationship of the soul to God. Thus it was God who bestowed the power and to whom, in last resort, everything was referred. Of man's own capacity the Reformers thought even more meanly than did the Church from which they separated. The Enlightenment, again, though much less clear as to the religious meaning of life, had yet no wish to ground itself upon man in the abstract. If its leading thinkers constituted reason the guide of life, they were at the same time very zealous to see that the human reason was anchored in the divine, since in no other way could it gain support and credibility: man's greatness and dignity indeed were due solely to his participation in this reason, and not in any way to his sensory equipment. This belief persisted also in later expressions of life, notably in German Humanism. Systems of this kind found the real reason of man's pre-eminence in the fact that, by virtue of his connexion with the deepest sources of existence, he could share the experiences of the universe and find himself inwardly related to the depth and the breadth of it. He, alone of all the beings known to us, becomes

a microcosm; he alone, as a rational being, can take an independent stand and shape life by his own decision; he alone, in virtue of this freedom, can assert his superiority against all merely naturalistic nature. No one has depicted the wealth of human life and being more vividly and attractively than Goethe, but at the same time no one was more anxious than he to keep man in a wide cosmic setting.

A conviction of this kind, once firmly planted in the modern world, gave a distinctive character to man's life and effort. His soul was beset with momentous tasks; new heights beckoned him onwards; eternal standards of thought and conduct regulated his action, kept it continually advancing, and lifted his gaze beyond the limits of the immediate present. Man was an ideal to himself.

Then came the move towards the naturalistic culture and the rejection of all inward connexions. Man becomes limited entirely to his immediate existence, and the one and only goal of action is the state of man himself, his subjective condition, his happiness. It is easily intelligible that, when everything else became uncertain, man should still seem to persist and with him his striving for happiness. This seemed of all things the most immediate and unquestionable. Feeling and action were nowhere more easily aroused than in the relation of man to man. Thus Feuerbach's saying becomes perfectly intelligible: "God was my first thought, reason my second, man my third and last." It is certainly true that even when religion and metaphysics lost their lustre, the direct social relations between man and man still left problems in abundance and it was an advantage to be able to treat them without introducing metaphysi-

cal complications. But away at the back of this humanistic development there lies also a question of principle, a question which no one to-day can evade. The earlier systematisations of life, — religion and immanental idealism alike, — were far too narrow and aristocratic. They contented themselves too exclusively with bringing spiritual goods within the reach of mankind in general and keeping them there, regarding the even-handed distribution of them to individual men merely as a secondary matter. Thus the majority were but little affected inwardly by the spiritual movement, and the injurious effects of this did not fail to show themselves. We too see them in the startling defection from religion at the present day. It must, therefore, become a great and necessary task to draw individual men more and more into the movement and increase their share, so far as possible, in the spiritual as well as in the material possession of the race. To do this cannot but heighten the strength and sincerity of our common life. If the naturalistic culture apply itself to this task with more than ordinary zeal, no one will take it amiss. But the matter of supreme importance continues always to be the whole man, and it is by the service rendered to him that the value of any particular activity is to be estimated. What is there left of him, however, when the naturalistic culture takes away all that concerns his relation to God or a universal reason, and his whole life comes to consist in an intercourse with sense-environment? What is he other than a natural being endowed with a few spiritual traits which can never, on this soil, grow together into a whole and become adequate to deal with natural impulses? And if the one and only goal of his effort should be his own well-being, —

the improvement of his own condition, — and everything he does should have reference to this and be measured by its contribution to it, the result could not be other than a great limitation and abasement of life. The effort put forth would always remain in bondage to the narrow self in all its grasping paltriness; it could never live into the object and be guided by its necessities, never seek to become inwardly united with men in the bonds of love and loyalty. Man would be always prisoner to himself. However wide the scope of his activity, he would yet be irresistibly fettered, like a chained beast, by the limitations of his own narrow sphere. Any objective goals he might reach must be for him only a means of subserving his subjective state, and thus treated they can neither win his wholehearted devotion nor reveal their own depth: this they can do only when treated as ends in themselves. If man, however, when limited to himself, falls a prey to pettiness and narrowness and drags down everything that he touches, then it is impossible for him to find any true satisfaction even in success. For close on the heels of pleasure comes the feeling of inward hollowness. Our own times bear incontrovertible witness to the truth that heightened enjoyment does not of itself bring genuine satisfaction.

But the naturalistic culture has not yet played its trump-card. This consists in the firm cohesion of individuals such as is effected by the union of mankind into an organised band of workers. This, as we saw, appeared to relieve life of all pettiness and secure its forward advance. Through the combination of individual forces in a common struggle with the environment, life achieved a virile self-consciousness. That

one man's efforts should depend on those of others seemed to induce also a harmony of inward disposition and to guarantee a spiritual solidarity. The opening up of ever wider prospects and the constant increase of human capacity encouraged man to form a high estimate of himself and his work, to seek fulfilment of all his wishes within his own sphere and through the medium of his own exertion, and even to become an object of veneration to himself.

With this fresh development life has indeed struck new paths. Under this new dispensation we are immersed in concrete actualities; we are witnessing the development of an imposing civilisation of work, which earlier times never so much as dreamt of. With serene confidence we are advancing towards a future of limitless prospect. But because this civilisation of work knows no limit to its outward expansion, it does not follow that it is likewise devoid of inner restriction. We have no assurance that what uplifts and satisfies man in one particular direction is therefore able to fill his whole life, to become his whole life. Man is after all more than an "animated tool" (Aristotle). In the midst of all his work he still remains an independent soul, and the soul does not lose itself in the work, but keeps its own distinct identity and returns ever and again from the work to itself. As certainly as the thinking being can make a general survey of individual occurrences and endeavour to unify them, so certainly must he demand from work not merely outward result but inward furtherance. Even work is still experience for the soul and insists on being valued as such, and this implies the appearance of new standards of measurement which work itself must recognise. And from this

point of view it soon becomes evident that the advantages of work are by no means pure gain, that disadvantages follow in their wake, and that all the achievements of work leave one problem still unsolved, namely, the welfare of man as a whole. This problem may for a time be pushed into the background, but it cannot be banished for ever.

The soul of the thinking being demands a spiritual freedom and seeks in this a content of life. Work directs effort to the object and rivets it there so closely that the soul becomes alienated from itself. Work dissects, whereas the soul demands unity. The soul's life cannot find satisfaction without having developed the whole range of its powers. Work employs a small fraction of power, a fraction which becomes ever smaller in proportion as work becomes more widely ramified. The soul cannot find the spiritual freedom which it seeks in merely running through one experience after another; it must survey them all together and bring them into a unity. To change it must oppose a fixed centre. Work, within the confines of naturalistic culture, throws man into a current of ceaseless activity which makes him a complete slave to the passing moment and allows him no opportunity for self-reflection and self-deepening.

All this goes to show that work takes in only a certain tract of life, not its whole range and, in particular, not its deepest source. We shall see that work, *qua* spiritual, can succeed only in so far as it is fed at this source, in so far as it is a message and emanation from a life that is spiritually free. Just as work becomes characteristic only when man is more than his work, so the civilisation founded upon work must, if it is to

be more than a soulless mechanism, rest on a deeper life in humanity. The problems of human intercourse also point to the existence of this greater depth. For it is clear that this intercourse is not synonymous with union for purposes of work. It is not sufficient that human forces should mingle and combine in active expression merely. We demand also a relationship of soul to soul, a life of fellowship, mutual understanding and sympathy. We do not wish to be indifferent to each other in our inward experience any more than in our outward life. But here the civilisation of mere work fails us wholly. However closely it may link men together outwardly, it is content to leave their souls completely isolated. However successfully individual achievements may combine to produce a common result, as, for example, in the case of a great building or a complicated mechanical structure, yet such combination does not readily give rise to mutual love, friendly sympathy, inner co-operation. Thus there was good ground for the statement that the ordinary relation subsisting between individual members of a great official organisation among us was one of "semi-hostile neutrality" (J. Goldstein). That divergences of sentiment among co-workers may go so far as to amount to bitterest enmity is indeed clearly shown by the social struggles of the present day. Is it not true that, despite the growth and systematisation of work, mankind to-day is becoming more and more split up into opposing cliques and factions, and that amid all our technical triumphs we as men are gradually drifting into a babylonian confusion of speech?

In short, living man, man as a whole, does not simply melt into his work. But in so far as he keeps his identity,

he insists upon his rights; he is not content to find help and satisfaction for his own life only, but longs and strives for the spiritual uplifting and true well-being of the whole of humanity. Yet how little can the naturalistic culture avail him here, removing as it does all possibility of an inward change, all chance of penetrating to new depths! The only contribution it can offer to this great problem is just the hope that as men mingle in social intercourse all that is good and true may combine together and the false and evil may be separated out. Somehow or other in the course of our social life unquestionable truths are to rise out of the welter of conflicting opinions, and common goals are to prove more potent than clashing individual interests. Hence the belief in the cumulative reason of the multitude, and with it a confidence in the power of numbers. The more men meet and work together, the more authoritative does the position of reason seem to be and the more certain the rejection of all that is petty and perverse. Thus runs a creed which is already centuries old, but which has waited till modern times for its full development.

Such a creed, however, finds but a sorry basis in the naturalistic system, nor has it the support of experience. Combination cannot raise man's collective status, unless it be under the control of an aim which overrides individual ends; it must be induced by the pressure of important tasks; it must be guided by an idea. At one time, state and fatherland may make the individual entirely oblivious to his own welfare in his anxiety for the whole; at another time the idea of humanity may stimulate a man to the greatest sacrifices. But how could the merely naturalistic culture, bringing men together in purely external ways, achieve results

like these or even make them intelligible? From the mere contact of primitive elements, which is the furthest point it can reach, the utmost that can be obtained is certain average values, certain mass-movements, widely diffused workings which are levelling rather than uplifting in character. Any gain which may accrue from the weeding out of individual self-will and caprice is dearly purchased at the cost of smoothing away all character and shaping life on a conventional pattern. History shows us with convincing clearness that the great onward movements, and in particular the great spiritual revivals, have arisen through an uncompromising antagonism to the average conditions of the environment: they were no mere summing-up of these conditions; one and all they lifted life on to a higher level than that of sorry mediocrity. The marvellous symmetry that delights us in the masterpieces of Greek art, and the confident idealism which breathes from the works of Greek philosophy are decisively and often even consciously opposed to the unrest of the Greek work-a-day world and its over-anxiety for the "goods that men compete for" (Aristotle). Again, when the Reformation brought out with renewed emphasis the fundamentally ethical character of Christianity, this was not the result of any friendly support from existing conditions. It was not a precipitate, as it were, of the environment. It originated, rather, in an honourable and holy anger with a lax and frivolous age. The utmost that mass-movements can do in such matters is to prepare the way or to set certain questions. In the attempt to answer them clearly and distinctly we shall soon find, — as our own times show with illuminating force, — that in these things a mere process of summation fails entirely.

The small can never become great through any amount of accumulation, any more than an unlimited aggregation of dwarf plants can produce a giant tree. Nay more, in the human sphere the small only becomes smaller by being accumulated, for in the process it becomes more self-conscious and the more confident of being able to dispense with all inward connexion. It is this self-consciousness of the small which produces that mediocrity and meanness of disposition that is such a deadly foe to all spiritual creative activity. How ineffective as regards spiritual capacity is all the play of small forces which occupies the average human life! For what do we find here? Mere individual life-units whose claims and desires stretch out to infinity and who in all questions think first of their own interest, — these units forced into connexion by the interlocking agency of civilised life, fairly well tamed too, but tamed only on the outside, so that at any moment the unbounded inward selfishness may break through. They regard each other with dull indifference or covetous envy, filled with an inner repugnance to all that is great, since greatness means for them only an oppressive burden; at the same time they wish to appear better than they are in the eyes of others and even in their own, and are therefore involved in constant hypocrisy. How should this sorry admixture, this unclean atmosphere, be the spiritual home of man and the primæval source of human greatness?

Our political and social struggles are usually animated by the hope that a reshaping of the conditions of social intercourse along the lines now being pursued will in itself bring about an inward uplifting and effect indeed a complete renewal of mankind. This belief is cherished

most strongly at the present day in the circles of social democracy. But its only real basis must lie in the conviction that there is a greater depth in man's nature which the desired change will help to reveal more fully. If this conviction, however, be lacking, as it must be in the case of the naturalistic culture, then we need only look away from the excitement of the moment and try to survey the whole situation in order to see clearly how little comfort or hope there is in all such effort. Within the limits of the naturalistic culture the only thing to be gained by these struggles is the shifting of power from one spot to another. One man must give way in order that another may take his place. The upward aspirant may indeed cherish the hope that his victory will mean the advancement of the total welfare, but, the victory once won, it is the old story over again. In last resort we find everywhere the same man, the same impulses, the same passions, nor do we observe any growth in him when he comes before us in his collective aspect.

The naturalistic culture is left then with still one hope, one refuge, — the hope, namely, that history, through the gradually accumulating achievements of the ages, will little by little raise the level of our life and lift us beyond ourselves. But here too we soon find ourselves in the same dilemma as that which met us in our consideration of social life: either history has a deeper and more inward significance, or it cannot achieve the results that are expected of it. The mere succession of epochs is not sufficient to effect a concentration of reason and an exclusion of unreason. Progress even in history requires decision, choice, direction, a higher power that transcends individual interests and opinions, a

power which pursues truth and withstands error, even in the teeth of man's resistance. Since the naturalistic culture recognises no such power, it must regard historical succession as devoid of all inner connexion; the past can never fuse with the present so that they may form an inward unity; it must rather hang upon our life like a dead weight. Those who declare a life-or-death war upon religion should of all others be the first to recognise how untrue it is that the historic structure is, as it were, a spiritual pyramid erected by steady, quiet, constructive upbuilding; for their own action would imply a sharp break in historical continuity. What one age had achieved would be entirely forfeit for another, would only offend it and rouse its antagonism.

Outward greatness with inward pettiness, wealth and diversity of achievement with hollow emptiness of spirit, — such is the mark of the merely naturalistic and humanistic culture. It cannot prevent small-mindedness from intruding into all the situations of life and enmeshing and degrading even work itself; it cannot prevent all our magnificent achievements, — scientific, artistic, and technical, — from being ofttimes mixed up with wofully narrow-minded views. In this connexion, moreover, the diffusion of culture among the masses, highly desirable in itself and even necessary though it may be, is bound to give rise to grave misgiving. Such a diffusion is certain to lower life's level unless the distribution of power and material goods be accompanied by a pronounced increase in man's spiritual possessions, a first-hand production of spiritual goods. Where this is wanting, the spiritual life succumbs to man's merely natural state, and at the same time falls a prey to inward dissolution. It becomes very clearly

evident then that man has no greater enemy than man himself.

We are becoming to-day more and more conscious of the pettiness and hopelessness of the merely naturalistic culture. This in itself is a good sign and the first step towards improvement. We are not so easily deceived by those empty phrases about human greatness and dignity which intoxicated the imagination of earlier times. In man as mere man we are beginning to see smallness rather than greatness. We are feeling ourselves so annoyingly, obtrusively enveloped by the pettily human, the "all too human," so wearied and oppressed by it, that the deeper minds among us are seized with an intense dislike of it all and a strong desire to be free from it. Had it not been for this longing, the strange idea of the "superman" would never have excited so much stir. But if man finds in himself so much to perplex him and fails in every attempt to give his life a meaning and value from the standpoint of his immediate existence, then the time has gone, or is going, when every attempt to press beyond that immediate existence was regarded as a pernicious error. The merely humanistic culture has, in the course of the world's history, been subjected to the test of experience and has failed to stand the test. Its own development has been the means of its outliving itself and, becoming exhausted, has indeed revealed its insurmountable limitations. Thus the humanistic culture has not succumbed to outside attack; it has supplied its own convincing refutation.

(*c*) *The Inward Shaping of Work*

That work does not fill the whole of life we have seen clearly, but our problems are not at an end; they reach right into the inner structure of work, and here too it is obvious that the task so nobly conceived by the modern movement as a whole is coming to a sorry standstill through being viewed too narrowly, and that here too there is danger lest gain turn into loss.

It was an increase of life-energy which caused modern man to break with the traditional method of regarding and dealing with the external world. The old view transferred man's own psychical experience too directly and immediately to his environment. Man and world, subject and object, merged so easily into one that neither factor could develop freely its own distinctive individuality, and life as a whole never attained to full clearness and breadth; nor could it possibly do so until that opposition was recognised. "In the Middle Ages both aspects of consciousness, — that which faces the world and that which faces man's own inner life, — lay, as it were, dreaming or half awake under a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, childish prejudice, and illusion. Seen through its meshes, the world and history were clothed in marvellous colours, but man recognised himself only as race, nation, sect, corporation, family, or under some other form of the general life. It was in Italy first that this veil was rent away. There a new view dawned on men, an objective way of regarding and treating the state and the things of this world generally. But at the same time the subjective side asserted its full power; man became a spiritual individual and recognised himself as such" (Jakob Burckhardt).

It is pre-eminently this which gives modern life and effort their distinctive stamp, — that power and the material opposed to it, subject and object, are now clearly distinguishable: each follows its own path, each develops its own particular character. This changes life from its foundations upwards into a task of an all-comprehensive kind, that of holding inwardly firm to the object which is moving farther away from it, though by no means vanishing altogether. The psychical emotion now finds an object with which it must come to terms. It has to overcome resistance and in the attempt to do so becomes itself stronger and more developed. This whole process of separation makes for a more vigorous winnowing of life and the extrusion, so far as possible, of all narrowly human tendency, all anthropomorphism both of concept and of aim. This is why the old concept of personality proved unsatisfactory when applied to cosmic problems. This winnowing and distinction are presupposed in modern science and in the development of a historical consciousness with its clear separation between present and past; they are presupposed also in that keener scrutiny and more active interest which modern man displays in dealing with actual conditions. Through this separation and subsequent reunion of psychical emotion and the material presented to it, of subject and object, activity for the first time develops into real work, which embraces the opposition and keeps the two aspects of it together.

In the prosecution of this task, however, two stages are clearly distinguishable. The aspects referred to may remain in juxtaposition and merely outward contact, or a comprehensive whole may be formed which brings the two aspects into more effective relation, allows them

to interpenetrate and develops them in close conjunction with each other. The former kind of work is more mechanical, the latter only is genuinely spiritual in character. The one is the work of the artisan, the other of the artist. Whereas the former remains inwardly alien and indifferent to his object, the latter absorbs it into his very being, actually finds his being in it. The highest modern work follows the artist's model. For in the case of our great poets and thinkers, the object is not left outside like something alien, but it is transplanted into the very soul and there vitalised. As power and the matter opposed to it thus meet together, life struggles forward from one level to another, aiming at realising itself as a whole. Its supreme task is now the attainment of a unifying power, a transcendent life whose kindling energy quickens what is dead, illumines what is dark, and guides the whole to spiritual unity. Thus for the first time work becomes creation. In the case of art, this is clear as day; but the thinker likewise must be an artist in this sense, that he also may not allow his material to fall outside his moulding activity and stiffen into a distinct and separate existence, but must draw both subject and object, after duly distinguishing between them, into a life-process that lifts them on to a higher level. He, like the artist, must not merely copy an outside existence. But this inward connexion of subject and object, this transcendence of their opposition, can come about only through a revolution in the situation as at first given, through the winning of a new life-level, a life of spiritual freedom, for which both subject and object are revelations and manifestations of a deeper-lying whole.

Unless we win a new world, we should be forced to

remain subject for ever to the power and limitations of this opposition, an opposition which spiritual creation alone can at once keep and overcome. Thus our modern era has to deal with a great problem of an inner kind: through rigorous elimination it has to reach new syntheses of life, and to compensate for the necessary analysis by a process of positive construction. This brings the whole of its work face to face with new requirements, and must inevitably revolutionise all concepts, as, for example, the concept of personality.

If work, then, be so closely bound up with spiritual creation, and must, if it is to succeed, be enveloped in an atmosphere of inward power, then its relationship to religion may indeed involve much perplexity, but it cannot give rise to any sharp antagonism. The case, of course, is very different when the rigidly naturalistic culture rejects root and branch both spiritual creation and inward power; but then it soon becomes obvious that work itself comes to a standstill; it cannot complete the movement it has begun; on the contrary, it becomes stiff and immobile and at the same time loses all inner vitality. Since, then, subject and object can no longer be inwardly connected and no vitalising soul can spring from their union, each must suffer a serious disablement. The object which no longer has any influx of life from the subject will lose more and more of its living colour and change ever more into a tissue of vague outlines, mere relations, empty forms, and formulas. On the other hand, the subject which no longer has any sure guide-post in the object will fall a prey to complete uncertainty and will vainly seek to cover its loss by empty yearning and brooding.

It is a development such as this, a laming of activity

full in the middle of its progress, which we see to-day in every branch of life as the result of a declension upon the naturalistic culture. Science can never venture, in a spirit of glad hopefulness, to rise to the level of knowledge, since this requires an appropriation and vitalising of the object. Her task is limited to the fixation, registration, and arrangement of phenomena which are inwardly alien to man; she is bound to regard every vitalising concept as an encroachment on the part of the subject, as a deceitful will-o'-the-wisp. A treatment of history along these lines would necessarily confine itself to the conscientious compilation of all that can be ascertained to-day concerning the external characteristics of past ages, but every attempt to ensoul and vitalise them would be regarded uneasily as offending the objectivity of an exact treatment. Similarly,too, for practical life. We can busy ourselves in improving the conditions around us; we can do very much for each other. But we cannot meet in inward communion; we cannot share each other's inward growth. And least of all can we contemplate an inward uplifting of humanity. There is much complaint to-day about the formalism and bureaucracy of our social life; but is it not merely the natural expression, the inevitable result of a life which is inwardly breaking up and therefore lacks any vitalising ideas? Everywhere spirit is driven out to make room for a soulless but steady-going mechanism, and this is then termed exactness or objectivity. Human effort is hedged round on every side with limitations; but it is one thing to be painfully conscious of these limitations and to struggle against them to the best of our power, and quite another thing to rejoice in them and to taboo everything that might let spirit into life.

In conclusion, man's life to-day is rent by the opposition between subjective emotionalism and soulless objectivity; his effort is thrown now on this side, now on that; and since the results of neither side, taken singly, subserve the development of the whole man, the final issue is a deep discontent, despite all brilliant outward successes.

Under these circumstances it must inevitably happen that the great creative personalities who inspire work with a soul and are the natural leaders of men grow rarer and rarer, and departments such as religion, philosophy, and great art, which depend on such personalities, become altogether stagnant. Technical development may indeed proceed with extraordinary rapidity, but it cannot compensate for the disappearance of vitalising spirit. Partisans of the naturalistic culture may find all this to be in perfect order and claim it as a triumph for their own views. Where there are no great problems there are also no great dangers; life has reached a low enough level to feel itself secure against all serious complications. Mankind as a whole, however, will pronounce a different verdict, for its own experience will show that the supposed gain signifies in reality a surrender of all spiritual freedom and an abandonment to utter emptiness. In proportion as this feeling grows stronger, man's effort will inevitably take the form of a struggle for spiritual self-preservation, and once he puts his whole strength into this struggle, there need be no anxiety as to the issue. But surely this means the re-appearance of all the problems which the naturalistic culture thought it had settled for ever.

It was the upheaval of Christianity and its rejection in many and various quarters that forced us to test what

modern culture itself might be capable of. For the force of that rejection lay not so much in any particular argument as in a complete revolution of life as a whole, a revolution which guided man's thought and effort into new channels and, in the process, came increasingly into opposition with Christianity. If, then, Christianity find itself threatened by the advance of the new movement, it must feel a certain relief when the latter meets with insurmountable obstacles and comes to a standstill. It must regard such an event as freeing it from oppression and helping to pave the way to an unprejudiced valuation of its position, as a kind of indirect proof in fact, or at least as a warning against over-hasty conclusions.

Now, as a matter of fact, it became perfectly evident that the modern movement was anything rather than a smooth and finally conclusive settlement. There is indeed something in it which no one can ultimately contest, something which cannot possibly be withdrawn. It has carried the life-process as a whole to a higher point of development, making it more alive, more free, more active. It has given man more virility and independence, thereby bringing him into a new relationship both to the world and to himself. But the movement was rather a beginning than an end; it asked more than it could answer; it involved man in a maze of perplexities. It was, moreover, impossible not to recognise that the mighty access of strength which it brought with it always presupposes, in actual working, something more than it is itself, something which serves it as support and rallying-point, an inwardness of life and a superiority to the world which it can neither dispense with nor yet evolve from its own resources. This deeper basis of life kept the modern world inwardly at one with

Christianity, despite all its outward antagonism. Are we to call it accidental that most of our leading modern thinkers have been unwilling to abandon Christianity altogether, however sharply they may have criticised its traditional form, and have striven to come to an agreement with it in precisely that which constituted the really essential part of their conviction? In the inward texture of modern creative work, a disposition to abandon Christianity and a disposition to return to it are often strangely intermingled. It is obvious that no fully satisfactory explanation of the matter has yet been given.

An irreconcilable opposition to Christianity, on the other hand, arose, as we have seen, from the tendency of the modern movement to define itself merely as a naturalistic culture, a culture which permits man to be wholly absorbed into his environment. But in proportion as this culture secured ascendency over the whole field, developed its own distinctive character more forcibly, and rejected more decisively all borrowed accretions, the more clearly did it reveal its inwardly destructive character. For all the results that had been reached through man's keener preoccupation with the visible world presupposed the help and support of a spiritual life which was superior to that world. The withdrawal of this spiritual life meant that existence broke up into detached fragments and that the whole status of life sank lower and lower. The world became a mere juxtaposition of unintelligible elements, and the life which was bound up with it lost all inner unity, all independence, all distinctive content. Man became identified with the welfare of his narrower self, and the resulting smallness of outlook was emphasised, not enlarged, by the

growing tendency of mankind to aggregate into masses. Work, cut off from all that is broadest and deepest in life, became soulless and mechanical. Man was torn and tossed to and fro between this mechanism and an empty subjectivity. Such a result can commend itself only to shallow souls who can renounce a spiritual self without a pang: mankind as a whole can never accept it with pleasure or even with resignation. But the only refuge from such destruction is to be sought through a sympathetic understanding of the task which Christianity undertook, — the task, namely, of giving life a soul and leading it to a height serene above all the complexities of existence. Thus a complete change passes over man's mood. Again he is possessed with a longing for more depth of life, for emancipation from the pressure of the world and the hollowness of the merely humanistic culture, for more simplicity of heart and more spontaneity of creation. It is true that this longing sometimes flows along as an undercurrent merely, while the surface-life still hugs negation and continues to regard destruction as emancipation. But the undercurrent is growing perceptibly stronger; the soul of the age is with it; it holds the promise of the future.

Meanwhile it must not be supposed that this rapprochement of our time with the soul of Christianity implies in any way a simple return to Christianity in its traditional form. For however many the limitations of the modern movement may be, the change it has wrought not merely in externals but also in the inward life is of far too momentous a nature not to have placed a deep gulf between us and the Christian tradition. It is just this which causes the tension and insecurity of the present situation, that we can see clearly the unsatis-

factoriness of the new movement and yet cannot go back to the old just as it was. The more we reflect on the situation and the more earnestly we seek for some stable support, the more clearly do we perceive that we are in the midst of a spiritual crisis, a crisis more acute and more far-reaching than any other age of history has passed through. For even the bitterest conflicts of other times were fought within a world of ideas which was common to both parties in the fray, and there were certain fundamental convictions which they left entirely untouched. To-day, however, it would seem, at least if we trust our first impressions, that the whole ground is giving way beneath us. Doubt never before penetrated so deep into fundamentals; there were never such passionate and widely diverging disputes as to the main trend of life, nor did human consciousness ever before find the whole substance of life so torn and thinned by the brooding, groping spirit of reflexion.

This critical situation is one which all present-day movements must take into account, and it contains a very definite indication also as to the treatment of the religious problem. Every department of life shares in the general upheaval, and no stability can be secured for one without being secured for the whole. Thus the religious problem cannot be treated in isolation; it hangs together with the general problem of life. We shall therefore never arrive at any settled conviction regarding Christianity without searching reflexion on what is going forward in life as a whole, and without some understanding as to how in the strength of this whole we may hope to become competent to deal with the problems of the present day. Indeed it is not putting the matter too strongly to say that, in view of the general

upheaval of life, there can be no revival of religion without a revival of the spiritual life in general, and that a religious reform has no chance of success unless it be closely linked with a wider spiritual movement. Scientific discussion is, therefore, acting in the interests of religion itself, when for a time it allows all direct religious reference to remain in abeyance that it may first of all make itself to some extent familiar with the trend of life as a whole. Only from the starting-point thus gained is there any hope of getting beyond the region of mere questions and pressing forward to an answer.

B. FOUNDATION OF THE ANSWER

I. Dawn of a New Life

(*a*) *The Problem*

The hope to achieve advance through a mapping-out of the present situation would seem at first sight to be ill-conceived. For a mere bird's-eye view of that situation with all its contradictions could not take us any further. It would rather increase the confusion, just as to-day the habit, — no less popular than convenient, — of mere detached reflexion on the ways and shortcomings of the age only succeeds in involving us in greater uncertainty. The only helpful kind of contemplation would be that which had set itself to discovery, which showed us more in things than we are wont to see to-day. Such contemplation, however, we are actually entering upon when we realise and do justice to the fact that the limitations and contradictions of the present position do not originate in a source outside us but spring directly from our own life: this life must be somehow superior to them in order to feel them as defects and blemishes. As, in things spiritual, every pang betrays a depth in the soul that feels it, so also a smallness, which is not accepted as natural and inevitable but rouses in us a sense of pain and wrong, proclaims a real greatness, hidden and remote though it may be from superficial observation. Hegel is right when he says that the man who is conscious of a limita-

tion is already, in a certain sense, beyond it. There is something in us men that refuses to let us become mere dependent fragments of a soulless world-machinery. To rivet all life and effort to the individual's subjective state seems to us a degrading slavery. We rebel against the shallowness and insincerity of a merely humanistic culture, a cult of man and the many; we struggle against the mechanising of work and the forsaking of all ideas. But how could this be possible if the limits of the naturalistic culture were really the limits of all human life, if there were not some active longing within us for an experience of the Whole, for inward independence, for a spiritual content of activity? Moreover, the thought of the growth and increase of power which so fills our minds to-day could not leave us so conscious of hollowness in the midst of all excitement, if there were not within us something which reaches beyond the power and seeks to link it to a wider life. Even the divisions of life as it branches out in various directions cannot be felt as painful, save by a being whose nature demands an embracing unity. If we have no such longing, then why should we have any misgiving in handing life over to the guidance of impulse and allowing it to fall into detached sections, as did earlier ages?

Looked at from this point of view, the present situation at once takes on a very different aspect. Before we were mainly conscious of its limitations and contradictions, we were not so alive to the fact that it was the age which was experiencing the limitations and eliciting the contradictions. Once we do justice to this side of the matter, and at the same time, learn to appreciate the age as a whole, we become aware that its life is richer than we thought: it is swayed by strong spiritual

passion, by a deep longing to make life more dependent on personal decision and to shape it by personal effort; it is absorbed in a keen struggle to secure a master-position from which the whole environment can be brought under control. Our age could not be so deeply stirred as it is, did it not contain many elements of reaction against its own limitations. We feel many things as defects simply because we are asserting greater claims and are forced to assert them in virtue of our historical position. From this point of view it must be reckoned one of the advantages of our time that it should have laid hold on so wide a range of problems and be working so zealously for their solution. It obviously contains far more than was revealed by first impressions, which always take account of achieved results rather than of forces still actively operating.

But even such reflexions on the greater depth of life to-day do not take us far towards the solution of our problem. Life may be deeper, but this has not lessened the complications and divisions under which we groan, nor does it open up any means of encountering them successfully. Such countermovement would be possible only on the condition that life, irrespective of all connexion with this particular epoch, became independent of the human situation. It would have to be unified into a system of its own, or, we might say, into one general movement. Its immediate content must be transformed, so that it would no longer be a mere series of occurrences at isolated points, but could oppose to such distractedness a vigorous self-concentration, thus becoming something whole and firmly established within itself. It is only a whole of this kind that could develop a distinctive content, exercise a distinctive function, and with assured

authority act as measure and guide of human action. Unless life have some such authoritative fixity over against human dealings, we can never arrive at any sure goal, any inner fellowship, any independence of time's fluctuations. To us modern men, however, taught by long experience of the world's work, that authoritative fixity can never come from without, since we see everything around us through the medium of our own life and thought and transform it in the seeing. It can come indeed in no other way than through a concentration of life itself, through the disclosure of a secure capital, so to speak, belonging to the race, an unassailable and primitive possession, which can never be derived from any specific part of life but only from the whole. If, then, the concentration of life within itself does not provide a power which is superior to all the changing conditions, moods, and conceits of man, if it does not free life from human casualness and uncertainty, our effort must in last resort prove fruitless; our whole life must become a chaos of intersecting and opposing movements, and the strength which any particular one of them could exert would decide the justice of its claim, if indeed the question of justice and truth had not to be altogether eliminated, while we surrendered ourselves wholly to the power of this dark and blind impulsion. We cannot, however, calmly accept such spiritual suicide without weighing most carefully the chances of escape. And if the only chance lie in life's becoming inwardly independent, we shall then be obliged to try this direction in preference to all others. Thus the question of questions now resolves itself into this: whether, within the human sphere, we can trace any such growth of independence. This,

however, is a question of fact; neither subtle reasoning nor bold speculation can supply the answer, but experience and experience alone, — not indeed an experience which springs into being with all the immediacy of a single impression, but one which requires that the manifold shall be connected and all contradictions transcended. Let us see then what this experience tells us.

(*b*) *The Solution*

To the question which has been forced upon us in the above manner we reply with confidence, Yes. It is a fact that we do find in the human sphere a concentration of life such as we are seeking, not indeed as something securely and completely within our grasp, but as a movement independent of our caprices, as a process which is continually advancing and taking shape. We find it in that which, in opposition to natural existence, is called spiritual life. A new stage of life is here easily recognisable so soon as we turn from its first dawn in man to a survey of its own distinctive features.

Spiritual life is an inward process, but not all inward process is spiritual life. That is to say, below the human stage and to a considerable distance also along the human level, there is a soul-life which, despite all its various manifestations, is yet subject to a rigid inner limitation. The limitation is this: that the soul-life subserves the natural self-preservation of the individual or the species, and, looked at more closely, reveals itself as a fragment of an extended nature-process. As this life receives its stimulus from without and directs its activities towards outside achievement, its forms naturally correspond with the mechanism of the external world. Any elements of newness that may make their appearance

within it do not fuse into a whole or constitute a kingdom of their own. It is therefore very intelligible that men of science, who simply identify nature with the universe, should regard the soul-life as a mere dependency of nature. But now a further development takes place within man's sphere, — not over the whole of it, but at least in one particular direction. The inner world becomes independent and, in the process, not only displays forms of life that are distinctive of itself, but strives also after an all-inclusive coherent system. It finds its task not in outside achievement but in the perfecting of itself and the working out of all its possibilities. How great the change and development thus brought into our life, we shall seek to indicate, at least in certain particulars.

Our immediate environment is a world of purely individual elements, elements which are linked together only by juxtaposition in space and succession in time. On the other hand, wherever spiritual life makes its appearance, totalities spring up and form themselves into inner systems: the worth of the individual is measured not by his direct achievement, but first and foremost by its value for the whole, the individual piece of knowledge by its significance for the search after truth, the individual experience by its meaning for happiness. The whole, in general outline, appears as operative from the very outset, imposing its norms on the individual element, but when the outline is filled in, we see it as the goal which all effort subserves. In a progress of this kind, from outline to filling-in, there is much more self-movement of the soul than where individual occurrences are fitted mechanically together. Life becomes far more of a deed.

Moreover, as the elements in this case are linked together inwardly rather than through outward contact, the very form which the work assumes evinces also an inward fellow-feeling. The efforts of individuals do not run indifferently alongside of each other. Science, for example, is not a mere juxtaposition of individual opinions, but the worker who puts forth effort at any particular spot is conscious that his effort is girt about and sustained by an effort of the whole to which he willingly yields his contribution. Only from this standpoint is it possible to explain and justify the conviction which has been the main stimulus to human effort, — that the truth won at any particular point is valid and binding throughout. If there were no inward unity of life over against all the divisions of mankind, such a conviction would be absolutely unintelligible. Truth could not possibly be valid for all men, unless it held an authoritative position towards all that is of merely human quality.

But as the spiritual movement rises triumphant over the juxtaposition of space, so also does it triumph over the succession of time. It is not in bondage to the idiosyncrasies of particular epochs with their changing conditions and requirements, but it seeks to discriminate in the constitution of time between the perishable and the imperishable. By means of spiritual creation, it seeks to transcend time and to wrest some abiding substance from the chances and changes of our human condition. Only so can the different epochs co-operate in a common task; only so can the creation of the moment endure for all time. Here, as before, what is to be valid for all time must be superior to all mere time. Here, too, we find a notable increase of activity.

Thus with the movement towards spirituality two ideas emerge which become dominant over life: the ideas of inward connexion and of eternity. But the change strikes yet deeper into the inner structure of life. Our consideration of the modern world has already shown us how the spiritual life effects a separation and reunion, how it first of all sunders power and resisting matter, subject and object, and then brings them together again through an uplifting creative activity. Here the spiritual movement reveals itself first and foremost not as a mere swinging to and fro from one side of the pendulum to the other, but as an activity which embraces both sides and, setting the whole range of life in movement, may well be called a total activity. In the second place, again, the spiritual life here reveals itself as no mere utilisation of given elements, but as a source of independent life, as an inwardly uplifting power. Life is still in flux, and figures as a process of pressing forward and climbing upward. The union it effects is no mere combination, but an opening up of new depths, spirit kindling spirit through mutual contact.

To show how greatly the situation has changed, let us cite an illustration. We know how the advance of civilisation has gradually loosened the originally tight bond which united individuals into a community of family or race. We know how it has made individuals steadily freer in regard to each other, and how this process promises to culminate in a boundless egoism. But it is impossible for the spiritual nature of man to tolerate such a conclusion. He takes up arms against it. His chances of victory, however, depend upon his success in ennobling the individual elements, breaking down the walls of separation through the miracle of

love, and, without damage to individuality, creating a new community which grows from within outwards. Were there no such development, no such birth of a new creature, all our trouble would be wasted. In the process of knowing, again, subject and object could never be brought together unless they were embraced in a higher unity. Once more we see that spiritual life is progress, climbing, development, not merely going to and fro within a given circle.

As in all this separation and reunion, this transcendence of opposition, life gains greater breadth and more inward mobility, so also as it enters into spiritual action, it shifts its centre to a point beyond the merely reflective consciousness; for this latter remains subject to the old opposition.

Life, however, cannot operate as a whole over against detached occurrences, it cannot hold together many diverse aspects, without developing a depth, giving itself a depth. But we cannot make this advance intelligible to ourselves save on the supposition that life forms within itself a home-centre whence it can act authoritatively and as a whole, instead of diffusing itself in mere isolated activities, and from that centre subdues and informs the manifold from within. This indicates an important distinction in our further conception of activity. There are activities which lie on the surface of life: a particular stimulus induces a particular response, without touching life inwardly and rousing it to activity as a whole. Again, there are other activities which are the expression of such a whole, activities in which the whole is vitally immanent and through which it steadfastly maintains itself. The former is a mere surface-activity, the latter a real

activity. The surface-activity occupies far the larger space in human life: it develops very many connexions with the outside world and arouses very many powers of the soul. But in all its operations it remains inwardly alien to man, since he never puts the whole of his soul into it, and therefore never experiences anything by its means. It is this which makes the general run of business so stale and unprofitable, — that with all its excitement and hurry it remains inwardly void and empty, that the workers show no soul of their own, and that they are therefore not really actors but only puppets pulled by the string of destiny. Now the spiritual life, by the development of that depth to which we have referred, takes us far beyond this stage. For it thus acquires an independent being of its own and an inward grading. The soul as a whole can now be present in the individual activity, finding itself in it but at the same time ennobling it. Thus for the first time it becomes possible to explain values like personality, and spiritual, — not merely moral, — character. These are not mere titles which we accord at our will and pleasure to conduct which remains in essence unaltered, but they introduce a new kind of life and conduct and constitute a starting-point whence we proceed to divide all work into two classes, that which has character and that which has none. The former alone is life in the true sense, since it involves the self-immediacy of life; the latter, on the other hand, is a mere catching at life, a semblance of life. It is the former only which can ask after life's meaning: to the latter such a question has no sense.

As these two kinds of activity are fundamentally different in nature, so also their fate in history has been

very different. The characterless activities depend on the conditions of the age and are bound to perish with them. Those that have character, on the other hand, as being an original source of life, are able to withstand all the changes of time and to continue working in all ages with a power that is constantly renewing itself. It is this which marks off classical ages and classical personalities from all others. The spirit of a man like Plato keeps its value and power, even if all Plato's doctrines should have become strange to us. For in the case of a great creative personality of this kind all particular work of his is only an expression and a symbol. The symbol may perish, but yet it makes appeal to an eternal truth-content of the creative spiritual life. This is very specially true in the case of great religious teachers.

Thus in the spiritual life we see revealed a series of transcending movements: a transcendence of mere juxtaposition in space and time, a transcendence of the opposition between subject and object through a full creative activity, a transcendence of the gulf between activity and being by the formation of a spiritual self operative in the action and the development of a spiritual character inspiring its whole extent. This series of transcending movements did not arise from any merely theoretical considerations, but from an actual unfolding of new life, a total change of life's condition. For there can be no doubt whatsoever that those further developments are not mere transpositions inside the world as given, but that they oppose to the given world a new world of self-activity. In this world all goods and values are transmuted. The ruling motive of all effort is no longer mere self-preservation in natural and social inter-

course, but the quickening into life within our own realm of all the fulness of the inner world. Only as life thus turns into itself and elaborates a depth can it win a content and an independent footing. Here for the first time we see a reality that is grounded in itself. Thus the new life is not one particular kind of life as contrasted with others, but the completion of life in general. The only life that is life in the genuine sense is that which becomes ensouled through the growth of an independent inward world. That this life does not remain a mere vague outline is shown both by its development in particular directions, *e.g.* those of the good, the true, and the beautiful, and by the formation of well-defined departments of life, such as we find in science and art, in law and economics, and so on. All these are by no means merely special applications of one general idea, but rather distinctive developments of an independent inward principle. While carrying on that general idea, they are at the same time characteristic unfoldings of the spiritual life, primal revelations, great experiences of mankind. They do not originate with mere finite man, but rather ennoble man's nature, show more in it than was suspected, set it in new contexts, give it new movements and contents. It is only through such a change that the conception of culture acquires a clear meaning and a real justification. That culture implies setting life in activity as opposed to the fixed and given condition of mere nature is implied even in the name (*colere* = to cultivate, to prepare), and is quite in accord with general opinion. But now comes the question how that activity is to be understood. If it is a mere ordering and re-arrangement within a given existence, then nothing essentially new will ever come

out of it. There will be no reward for the endless trouble; the whole thing will end in sheer emptiness. It is only if culture allow of a thoroughgoing revolution, if the mere activity deepen into self-activity and this become strong enough to produce a new world, a new life, a new man, — only then has culture any claim to man's work, any hold over his spirit; only then can it keep the freshness and simplicity of youth in face of all the cumber and growing complexity of the ages; only then can it renew itself continually, whereas otherwise in the course of the centuries it must become ever more tedious and senile. And while this deepened activity reveals an overflowing fulness of life and the insistent demand for a transformation of all given content, it yet continues to focus all diversity upon one single task, the turning towards self-immediacy of life and a spiritualising of reality.

Thus the question from which we started has found an affirmative answer. Life is really in process of becoming independent within man's sphere. In him we see the emergence of a new world which becomes his own life, and at the same time gives him an inner stability, a superiority to all that is dark and baffling. But as this fresh development of life lifts man wholly above this original level, — places him indeed in sharp antagonism to it, — it can never be merely a product of man himself. We are obliged rather to see in it some cosmic movement, the emergence of a new stage of life which breaks into view in man and demands his co-operation. "A movement towards wholeness and self-immediacy of life could never spring up among us finite and scattered individuals, unless reality constituted a whole and drew its life from the whole. There must be a spiritual life superior to

man, which can, however, disclose itself to him and become actually his own being" ("Meaning and Value of Life").

This conviction sets the whole of the world and its movement in a unique light and therewith also man's life and work. The given world, in which the determining influence of nature is preponderant, now appears merely as a stage of reality, which the onward movement leaves behind as it rises to the stage of the spiritual life and acquires therewith for the first time a self-immediate being. In man, however, the two stages meet. Belonging in the first instance to nature, he can yet rise to spirituality and by achieving a new life and being can at the same time further the progress of the world.

As sharer in such a life, and fortified by such inner union with the whole of the universe and its fundamental principles, man can view the perplexities of the present age or of any other without dismay. That perplexities, resistance, and hindrance should arise cannot be any cause for wonder, since we are full in the middle of the movement and have to champion one whole stage of reality against another. It is also quite easy to understand that moments should arise, — critical moments for our human destiny, — which require us to fall back upon ultimate principles and to redirect our effort. Provided, however, that there are such ultimate principles and that their influence extends to us, we have in them a stable support and an inexhaustible well-spring of life. We are enabled, moreover, to struggle with good heart against the distractions and confusions of the present day, its uncertainties and its proneness to negation. This struggle after all is not merely our affair, and stronger forces are at work in it than those of mere finite man.

II. Movement towards Religion

(*a*) *Universal Religion*

Our previous enquiry ended upon an optimistic note, and we hope that ultimately we may be able to justify this optimism. But at the outset the matter is not so simple; and it is just those considerations which promised us support and uplifting that are responsible for the further complications. For certain though it be that an independent spiritual life makes its appearance in man's sphere, it is not thereby settled that this life should become his main world, stir the depths of his soul, and thence control his striving. It is an old complaint that the new world which comes to man does not find him strong enough to appropriate it, and that, instead of becoming central for his life, it only touches its fringe. But if it does not obtain his whole devotion, then its contents must grow dim and blurred. For if, even in the case of outside things, close attention be necessary in order to see them fully and clearly, still more true is it in the domain of unseen goods and values that everything which fails to win the soul's devotion must remain obscure and uncertain. In such a condition of enfeebled energy and impoverished content, spirituality may well seem a mere shadow which attends upon our life but cannot influence it; and it becomes quite intelligible that the whole thing should be explained ever and again as a mere conceit of the imagination. But this is unjust. Weak as the spiritual life may be in our midst, yet that it is no merely imaginary product is sufficiently evidenced by the uniqueness of its content: so unique is it that even the boldest fancy which took

mere nature as a starting-point would never happen on it. However wide, then, the gulf which separates man from that life, the question of the life's reality is not thereby affected. If a constellation be veiled from view, it has not therefore set.

But this state of things certainly involves man in a harsh contradiction which it is impossible to tolerate permanently. That the new life belongs to him, lifts him for the first time above other beings, and for the first time gives his life a content, — this he cannot well dispute. If, however, at the same time, he has not the strength requisite to climb the height from which that life opens out to him, the content of life is then at variance with his power to appropriate it. The very thing that he cannot possibly dispense with remains strange and alien to him. A rigid wall of separation seems to separate his every-day willing and doing from a deeper nature which is divined rather than seen. This new element, even in its shadowy condition, is strong enough to disturb the ordinary current of our life, but it does not thereby give us any new life. We hear a life-stream murmuring, but we find no access to it. Thus the new life is ours and yet not ours; it remains strange, and yet we cannot put it away from us.

This dualism in the innermost soul, this division between content and power to appropriate it is more than all else responsible for the slackness and insincerity, — and the discontent, too, — which permeate our ordinary civilised life and also reach down into the individual soul. For that which gave the soul greatness, the unfolding of a personality, and the development of a spiritual individuality, is now apt to become weakly dependent on another type of life. There is a certain

will in operation, but it is not strong enough to be effective.

The higher our estimate of the uniqueness and greatness of spirit, the greater distance do we find between man and his true self, and the graver must the complication seem to be. Its full force must be felt in particular where the conviction prevails that genuinely spiritual life can arise only when activity is accompanied by a development of the self, when the activity passes into self-activity, so that in lieu of a mere play of mechanical forces we have true acquisition of content. The dualism in man's nature, however, would seem to make this impossible, and, if so, all prospect of genuine life would vanish, and all impulse to achieve it would collapse.

As a matter of fact, it has not thus collapsed, and spiritual life, — genuine spiritual life, — has proved itself even in man's domain to be no mere shade and semblance. Despite all resistance, genuine culture has arisen and maintained itself through the ages. Art and science, law and morality have developed kingdoms of their own. The individual soul, also, has its share in the movement, since the higher element within it separates itself from the lower, consolidates its forces, and takes up the struggle against its rival. How are we to understand all this?

The chasm is much too deep, the antagonism much too strong, for any gradual accession of human strength to have produced such a result. We cannot understand it save on the assumption that spirituality in man derives its being and its independent status from the spiritual life as a whole. It must be that the universal life itself breaks through in us directly, and lifts us by its presence

sheer above the weakness of our capacity and the pettiness of our motives. It must set us in the full current of that life-stream which else we only hear in the distance. It must break down the wall of separation which severed us from the depth of our own nature. Thus and thus only can the spiritual life become our own affair and spring up in us with native energy. Thus alone do we become independent foci of life, spiritual forces, co-workers in the cosmic process. The spiritual is now no longer something half-foreign to us, imposed on us from outside, always ruling and demanding. It becomes rather our own being and we feel that we stand to it in a relation of freedom. It is in this way that to work for it becomes a complete end in itself, and fills us directly with pure and disinterested joy. But all this is no product of natural evolution; it arises through man being uplifted by the power of the whole, in other words, through his turning to religion. The presupposition of religion is in fact just this, that something higher makes its appearance in man and yet is hindered and restricted in the condition in which it first finds him. Religion is the overcoming of such hindrance and restriction.

This whole movement is not just a development of ordinary human capacity; it can arise only through a decisive break with ordinary conditions: it involves a rupture, a discontinuity of life. This contrast is of the very essence of religion. There can be no religion that does not imply opposition to man's primitive condition and a re-orientation of life. To this extent religion involves revelation and miracle and is unthinkable without them. The prevailing confusion of ideas on these subjects at the present day gives the conception

of an "immanental" religion almost a magical fascination for a great many people. They think that by means of it they can keep what is valuable in religion and yet escape its perplexities, and they do not see that their expedient destroys precisely that which is essential and valuable in religion, namely, its power to free man from the entanglements of the world as given, and to rescue the spirituality which else is oppressed and fettered by its bondage to that which is human in the petty, narrow sense of the term. Such deceptive substitutes as that of an immanental religion gain consequence and standing from a certain unsatisfactory presentation of the working of religion which is commonly put forward by those who stand outside it. They are of opinion that to make religion depend upon divine power is to condemn man to insignificance and rob him of all freedom. As a matter of fact, it is just the opposite contention which is true. There is no greatness and no freedom apart from such recourse to the divine. For, apart from it, the spiritual life is always in bondage to the sorry muddle of human mediocrity, and there can be no development of any inward greatness. To achieve such greatness we must break loose from mediocrity and live and work in the power of a transcendent whole. For only so can man draw on the fulness of infinite life, be firmly rooted within himself, and, by bringing isolated characteristics together, develop a spiritual character which permeates the whole range of his activity. As for freedom, the kernel of all religion is its power to make man free and independent, and summon him to a voluntary co-operation in the great work of the spirit. To use religious phraseology: freedom is the highest manifestation of grace. That creative life should be shared certainly

involves a mystery, but this inexplicable mystery is at the same time an obvious fact. All our courage and strength to face life's tasks are rooted in it. It makes our life for the first time truly our own, gives it the steady hope of a new beginning and a fadeless youth, enables it to view the world with other eyes and to gain an understanding of Meister Eckhart's saying, that we should seek God not "in evening-vision but in morning-light." Thus it is no anxious and oppressed spirit that speaks to us from the bosom of religion, but a spirit, rather, of assurance and joy, able to see clearly the unsatisfactoriness of the world, but thereby acquiring for the first time the consciousness of its own superiority. This assurance and joyousness are most intimately bound up with reverence and gratitude. Though man is conscious of his greatness, it is not a greatness which his vanity can put before him as his own, but rather one to which the saying applies: "What have we that we have not received?"

Viewed in this light, all genuine spiritual culture involves religion, the consciousness of being sustained and impelled, led and guided by superhuman power; spiritual culture in all its ramifications stands witness to the truth of religion. This consciousness of being sustained and guided by superhuman power has always been most intense when spiritual creation has been on a high level, since these were the times that showed greatest discrepancy between human capacity and spiritual achievement. Thus creative geniuses in every field, even when they have come into sharp conflict with the traditional religion, have felt as though they were led and guarded by an unseen Power. Their creative work has been the expression of an inner necessity which

not only triumphed victorious over morbid doubt and brooding, but gave them also the fixed consciousness of superiority to all their external environment.

This consciousness, in which dependence and independence are inextricably blended, takes, however, a different form in each of life's different departments. The great artist feels it differently from the great thinker. He will be more directly conscious of his creative power as being a gift and something that lifts him above himself. But is it not equally true that the great thinkers also could not with gladness and confidence have opposed the indwelling necessity within them to all the claims of environment and tradition, had they not been inspired by the conviction that this necessity had a deeper root than the idiosyncrasy of their own nature? Nor should it be a mere baseless accident that hardly one great thinker, one of those whose systems have embraced the whole of reality, has ever found a final and satisfactory solution in atheism. Where activity has been more outwardly directed, as in the case of statesmen and warriors, the superior power which has excited the feeling of dependency has been viewed rather as a fate which protects and upholds man so long as it can use him, but lets him fall so soon as his work is done. But here too the conviction still rules that man's conduct and success do not depend entirely upon himself. In proportion, however, as life turns inward and seeks furtherance from within, religion also will develop more and more along spiritual and ethical lines.

But the working of the superior power is not confined to the leaders among men. It penetrates every part of life, and is mighty both in individuals and in the building-up of culture as a whole. It manifests itself in a move-

ment for life's progress and re-fashioning, in a transformation of that which at first seemed purely external into an inner power, in an elevation of man above his own motives, in an eliciting of new connexions and an emancipation from petty selfdom. The Copernican revolution which Kant's genius effected in the domain of knowledge is really going on throughout the whole course of the world's history. If life's outlook was at first external and it exhausted all its energies in outside achievement, yet gradually it works out a more inward character and shifts its centre of gravity from without to within. Instead of viewing and treating the inner from the standpoint of the outer, it shows an increasing tendency to treat the outer from an inner point of view. That this is no mere transposition, but a far-reaching revolution, is shown very clearly by the teaching of history.

It is shown both in man's relation to things and in his relation to his fellow-men. Things and persons alike win a new meaning as life unfolds. We busy ourselves with objects and work at them in the first instance for our own advantage. We cannot do otherwise, since the continuous requirements of our physical self-preservation force us to treat things in this utilitarian way. But the work which was at first merely a means becomes, in the course of life's development, an end in itself. We desire the success of the cause; we are able to subordinate our own comfort willingly to its requirements. And this is the more true in proportion as work is no longer limited to single productions but concentrates into a whole, becomes a life-calling and as such assumes a permanent character. It then becomes an inner support to man and keeps him from the smallness which else would

characterise him. Thus life climbs by means of work.

What is true for the individual is true also for humanity as a whole. Here we are dealing with the upbuilding of civilisation. Man plays his part in it at the outset merely from motives of profit and enjoyment. He observes phenomena and seeks the rules that direct their course, in order to defy hostile powers in the struggle for existence and to find his way through the mysterious world. But knowledge and research are ever drawing him on, disentangling themselves from mere profit and finally breaking loose from it entirely. Through such a severance, and in no other way, science first becomes possible, and science not only develops its own necessities but also enlists man's powers in their behalf. It becomes an uplifting force which causes all selfish aims to be forgotten in the search after truth. Similarly also in the case of art and the other departments of life. In one and all there is the separation going on between a genuine spiritual culture and a merely humanistic culture, which may be defined as an adaptation of cultural work to suit the aims and interests of mere finite man. This lower culture by no means disappears with the advent of the higher, and, to all appearance, the two streams may often run together, but there is in truth a wide distance between them; indeed they are quite opposite in tendency. The humanistic culture is always drawing its nourishment from the spiritual culture. Without this, it could not subsist at all, and the medley of individual efforts would not unify even into the semblance of a culture.

In the relationship of man to man the inward elevation of life shows up still more clearly. The bonds that unite

men in love and friendship are at the outset somewhat external and transient. But in proportion as those relations become firmly established and develop a community of life, the more does one man become dear and valuable to another for his own sake, the more does society become a great good in itself, the more spiritual is its content, the more opposed its influence to selfish narrowness. This educative and ennobling power of life reaches also to the wider spheres of social intercourse. The motive which impels men to form larger communities is at first not much more than need and self-interest, but the development of states and nations soon leaves such narrow boundaries far behind. Common work, common experience, common successes, common needs weld also men's souls together, and give rise to an inner community, which is a strong counteracting agency to the exclusive pursuit of private interests and impels man to unselfish toil and even joyful sacrifice. The common feeling which thus arises, the flame of pure patriotism, rides roughshod over all merely individual interests put together. And finally this tendency to spiritualise and ennoble human relations extends to the whole of humanity. The fact that we live on the same planet and are dependent on each other through the division of labour is not nearly sufficient to unite us inwardly and instil into us genuine sympathy and love for one another. To this end, we repeat, man must be lifted up; there must be an inrush of new power. Only a life which includes us all root and branch and melts down all rigid distinctions can produce genuine humanity, kindness, sympathy, and love, not as passing emotions of a merely subjective mood, — which count for very little in bringing about the great

end, — but as mighty currents flowing from within outwards, making every man feel with his fellow, sorrow and rejoice with him, assimilate his life directly to his own. The destiny of each individual life is now lived through in the light of the destiny of the whole: it is that which illumines and ennobles it. That such conditions give rise to great historical movements is shown by the world-religions, whether, like Buddhism, they lay the main stress on sympathy, or, like Christianity, on love.

All this implies a transcendence and reversal of man's original state. That a new and opposing element is really introduced is evidenced also by the fact that, even after the uplifting process has begun, the lower element still persists, occupies life to a very large extent, and does all that it can by its pettiness and sluggishness to resist the ascending movement. Thus the higher principle has always had to fight hard. But it is just in so doing that it displays its independence and spontaneity and shows that it has sprung from deeper sources.

There is still another direction in which we see the working of a supra-human life at once immanent in human nature and yet transcending it. We refer to the movement towards spirituality which we find running through history, not filling every page of it, but forming, as it were, a standard which confronts and opposes its average level. History is no mere permutation and combination of given elements, but it brings about an inner transformation of life; new depths emerge; the inwardness and spontaneity of life are vastly increased. Taken as a whole, history is the elaboration of a realm of inwardness. For how came it to pass that men did not simply

rest content with that which they possessed? What force was it that drove them to seek new things and to pursue them in the teeth of resistance and often at the cost of sternest toil and conflict? Surely it was some inward impulse that drove life forward, some overmastering desire for more content and self-immediacy of life. But such an impulse could not originate in man alone, but must come from some life working in him, seeking its own depth and therewith fulfilling itself. In every department we can trace the process by which the spiritual life is continually growing more independent, refusing to be controlled from without, supplying in an ever greater degree its own content. The morality, for example, which proved entirely satisfactory to the golden age of antiquity, is insufficient for its closing days and most emphatically so for the newly dawning Christian religion. Thus a man like Augustine could characterise the virtues of antiquity with the harsh phrase, "splendid vices" (*virtutes veterum splendida vitia*). Expressed in this drastic form the judgment was certainly unfair, but it had just so much basis, that the ideal of ancient ethics was rather the unfolding and ennoblement of a nature already given than the implanting of a new life opposed to nature. Similarly with the striving after knowledge. Thought and sense were much more intimately allied in the ancient world, and even spiritual values did not wholly exclude all sensory elements. In this respect mediævalism agreed with antiquity. It is our modern world which for the first time discriminates more sharply between the two and gives the spiritual element a completely independent status, whence it may re-fashion the world of sense. Here, as in the case of conduct, the growing independence of

spirituality by no means extinguishes the sensory element altogether, but it alters its status and its value, and makes the whole of life more mobile and self-active. Everywhere the progress of the movement reveals inadequacies in that which hitherto seemed completely satisfactory. It would appear as though the spiritual life were pushing forward in advance of that which at first seemed to be its whole content.

Nor is the ascending movement confined to special branches of life; it applies also to life as a whole. For we fight also for this whole, and here, too, there is an unresting movement, pressing on from stage to stage in complete indifference to the opinions and wishes of individual men. Starting from mere sporadic manifestation the spiritual movement struggles to reach a stable synthesis and at the same time to acquire a definite character impressing its own distinctive mark on everything individual. The first synthesis of this kind in our western culture was that effected in the great days of classical antiquity. But its artistic shaping of reality gives no permanent satisfaction to the spiritual life, since it is always arousing fresh questions, and making fresh contributions and fresh demands. The new material thus introduced loosens the old connexions, and an entire disruption is threatened, till at last, in Christianity, a new synthesis is formed. But, as we have seen, this also has to meet the shock of resistance, and, amid much stress of upheaval and doubt, it finds itself confronted by the modern life-system resting on a scientific basis. But since this, in turn, despite the way in which it widens man's experience of the outside world, proves inwardly too small and narrow, we find ourselves again to-day in a state of dissolution, though at the same

time seeking for a new basis of union. It would seem, then, that we have alternately creative and critical periods, synthetic epochs followed by analytic. But all in last resort are parts of one single continuous movement. Even that which at first seems purely negative, and poses as such, contributes in the end to an affirmative, inasmuch as it furthers the advance of the whole and paves the way for new syntheses. The creative periods, moreover, also show a certain rhythm. The movement of the spiritual life is at first directed more towards the world; then from this it turns back upon itself. Thus the creative genius of the Greeks embraced and moulded the whole extent of the cosmos, whereas the early Christians anchored the spiritual life within itself, and deepened it from within. The modern period again has felt a renewed and stronger impulse to work with restless zeal in the outside world; whereas, at the present moment, we are again conscious of an intense desire for more self-concentration of the spiritual life. From the human point of view, these fluctuations may create an impression of great insecurity; but, as a matter of fact, the phases of expansion and of concentration, like those of affirmation and negation, are part of one single mighty movement in which the spiritual life, as manifested in man, is both seeking itself and finding expression in work. But whence should come the impulse and the strength for all this save from the spiritual life itself? The upheavals and revolutions which the movement involves are anything but comfortable and agreeable to man. They often ride roughshod over his welfare; they plunge him into indescribable depths of doubt and sorrow and need; they arouse discord, hate, and strife; they never leave his life in peace. But it is they, notwithstanding,

which make man great and give content to his life. Take them away, and then see how poverty-stricken and meaningless that life becomes. What is it, then, which drives him into the struggle and forces him to seek his greatness in ways so directly opposed to his comfort? It is nothing but the kindling of independent spirituality even within his own sphere; it is a higher power which at the same time constitutes the very essence of his own nature. Here as before there is a glaring opposition between the life of ascent and the average mode of life; since in the first place the former demands a movement from whole to whole, whereas the latter is a coursing to and fro between individual elements, and in the second place the former develops a totally different scheme of goods and values from the latter. Thus side by side with that movement which embraces and unifies the world's history, there is a constantly fluctuating ebb and flow from moment to moment, from generation to generation. Viewed from the standpoint of this latter movement, the whole appears as nothing but confusion and chaos.

Thus the conclusion remains that throughout the whole of human life there is an unfolding of independent and genuine spirituality, which owes its origin to no merely human capacity, but arises only when this capacity is heightened through the presence of divine power, — and again does not permeate things through and through, but rather opposes and works against them. We may therefore assert that nowhere in man's sphere is there any genuine spiritual life without some element of religion, though, so far as man's consciousness is concerned, the religion is often unsuspected. This kind of religion may therefore be termed universal.

(*b*) *Characteristic Religion*

But this universal religion with its proclamation of the exaltation of man to be a free upholder of spiritual life does not lead us at once to a final conclusion. It brings us no nearer to that which for the historic religions was the matter of supreme importance. It does not even enable us to understand how in general religion could so concentrate itself as to form a separate department over against the rest of life and could embody itself in a historic form. The main concern of the historic religions was not the kindling of spirituality, but the saving of the human soul and the whole human life from intolerable contradiction, the emancipation from sin and sorrow, the upholding of the spiritual life against the destruction which threatens it on every hand. In pursuit of this aim these religions were obliged to sever themselves from the rest of life and to found a new order of fellowship. Now does the previous course of our enquiry make it possible for us to understand such a development, — to understand both the dawn of a desire for help and salvation, and the disclosure of a means whereby such desire may be satisfied? We believe we can answer both questions with a confident affirmative.

It is, in the first place, an illuminating fact that the discovery of an independent spiritual life within man's sphere makes the aspect of the world and the condition of man's life not a simpler, but rather a more complicated thing. For this development implies demands upon reality which experience does not bear out, nay, even contradicts outright. If the spiritual life be the heart and motive-power of all reality, and a primal source of

life to man, then we should expect that even amid inferior surroundings it would yet keep its own height assured and would follow its own path unperturbed by all alien influence. We should expect also that man, in virtue of his new dignity, would occupy an unassailable position over against all that was below the spiritual level. Any opposition actually experienced could be attributed to the laggardliness of mediocrity and its refusal to comply with the demands of the spiritual life. It could never hinder this life in its own creative function, keep it from its goals, divide it against itself.

Any unprejudiced observation of experience, however, shows that the hindrance is effective enough not only to limit the spiritual life from the outside, but also to penetrate within and threaten to shatter it. It seems as though it were unable to maintain its independence and must succumb to foreign powers. We find in the first place that our natural environment is not merely indifferent to the aims of the spiritual life. Not only does it build up and cast down with an apparently complete unconcern for the effect upon that life, but it actually seems to dominate it completely and measure it by its own standards. Bodily endowment determines, to all appearance, the level of spirituality, and the fact of heredity makes man a mere link in a mysterious chain of natural causation. Even in his action and endeavour he appears as a slave of the nature he was so proud of transcending. Sensuality, under the influence of civilisation, outgrows its simple natural state and passes into a voluptuous refinement, in which perverted form it drags all spiritual endeavour down to its own level. Human society is not merely dull and indifferent to the aims of the spiritual life, but it gains possession of the

spiritual powers and forces them to subserve its own interest; while, in the case of the individual, the growth of spirituality heightens the natural desire for self-preservation into a boundless egoism, which treats all the fulness and variety of the world as a mere means and instrument of personal well-being. But the fact that spiritual life can be thus impaired betrays in last resort its inner weakness within our human sphere. The life-unity shows itself not strong enough to hold the separate forces firmly together and adjust their respective claims, with the result that they break loose from their foundation, strike out paths of their own and thus fall inevitably into sharp contradiction with each other and also with the aims of the whole, so that total dissolution bids fair to be the final issue. Departmental systems of culture confront each other, drag the whole man in one particular direction, develop certain powers at the cost of letting others become atrophied, and are liable to prove dangerous to the integrity and inwardness of the soul. Thus science may give birth to intellectual coldness, pride, and narrow-heartedness; art may become a source of vanity and effeminacy. As spiritual movements among men thus turn against spirit itself, it may well seem that spirit contradicts itself and is counteracting its own efforts, — a state of affairs which brings to mind the remarkable mediæval saying: "No one is against God but God Himself" (*nemo contra deum nisi deus ipse*). The perverseness indeed amounts even to a pleasure in denying, opposing, and destroying good; it becomes a diabolical joy in inflicting harm. Enigmatic though such abysses of human nature may be, it is only a shallow rationalism which can overlook them. We do not free ourselves from darkness by closing our eyes to it.

But if we cannot explain this discord and, in particular, the problem of evil, then all the trouble that theologians and philosophers have bestowed on it is sadly wasted. And still less can optimism explain it away. If this seems to have any success, it is only because it assumes that our relationship to the world is purely that of spectators. From the onlooker's point of view, things may easily be arranged and adjusted so as to secure a fair degree of harmony. But our actual relationship to the world as well as to ourselves is not that of mere spectators. We feel and live through the events that take place in it, so that the pacifying attempts of optimism bring us but scant satisfaction.

But even if the contradiction must remain in all its acuteness, it in no way destroys the fundamental fact of an appearance of the spiritual life in our midst; it rather posits it as an assumption. The harm and perversion would be impossible, if there were nothing to harm and to pervert. Without good, evil is unthinkable. The very risks we run may make us conscious of something deeper than we before suspected. Guilt may strengthen our certainty of the government of a moral order; doubt may make us more convinced of the existence of a truth. But this reflexion still leaves us our contradiction, and with it the danger that our life and effort may come to a complete standstill. What does the appearance of a new life avail us if it cannot make its promise good? Must it not be merely an oppressive burden if it propose to us tasks which under given conditions we are totally unable to discharge?

The only hope of retaining energy and confidence is that there should be a possibility of rising above the contradictory state we have described, that there should be

a further revelation of the spiritual world transcending all contradiction. And it is precisely this possibility which religion maintains, all religion, that is, which is a religion of the spirit and not of authority. For its contention is this: that through the opening-up of an immediate relationship of the soul and of man to a Godhead which is not merely immanent in the world but also transcendent, a new spiritual life wells up which cannot be thus imperilled and distorted, since now all human activity has the support and sustenance of the divine. In their more detailed account of this relationship the various religions part company; but wheresoever they become religions of redemption, there is never any doubt that the depth here awakened is not present in the soul from the beginning, — its connexion with God being only an after-development, — but that it springs out of this relationship in the first instance and must be continually dependent on it. It does not exist in its own right, but only as it refers to and is directed towards that being on which it rests. We have here not just the heightened form of something old, but the creation of something new.

The proof of this extension, — this origination of a new life, — can be supplied only by the actual development of this life: in the individual we have the emergence of a soul-experience which transcends all mere work, even the highest; and in mankind as a whole we have the birth of a spiritual freedom independent of all culture, even though it be spiritual in kind. As we Germans say with justice that man is more than his work, so we might also say that human life is more than a mere edifice of culture. For what is to become of this culture if it make man its mere servant and tool, and pose as an

ultimate end in itself, detached from a personal freedom which lives through it and makes it its own? Will it not, as the result of such detachment, become a destructive power, which sucks the very soul out of man and then flings him carelessly aside? And does not all its noisy work end in nothing but hollow futility, unless at some point it become a matter of personal experience? But it cannot become a personal experience, any more than work could in the case of the individual, unless it rest upon a life which transcends its own. And whence should this life proceed save from direct communion with the transcendent source of all reality?

The case clearly stands as follows: The spiritual life in its totality involves a task which it is bound to persevere in despite all obstacles. But it cannot meet these obstacles unless it is in some way lifted above them, unless it has some sure ground from which to confront them. Now it is not lifted above them at every point of life's domain, but only along one special direction, only where a new depth is being formed over against the sphere of work. This means that there is a gradation within the spiritual life itself, a distinction between work and the experience of the soul, — a distinction which in no way lessens the value of work, but at the same time precludes our viewing work as final. The soul-experience also has its own task and form of activity. For, however true it be that human life here depends on the divine, yet it is not absorbed by it nor even degraded to the level of a mere passive receptacle, but the marvel which is characteristic of all genuine spiritual life is manifested here in a heightened degree: to wit, the generation of independence from the working of a creative power. In the depths of man's soul there is the capacity to incline

towards an action or resist it, to affirm something or revolt from it. The divine never becomes fully man's save through his own decision and appropriative activity. But since in this choice it is not one particular part of the soul that is involved, but the soul as a totality, this task is supreme over all others, and, in the case of any collision of interests takes unconditionally the first place. Since, moreover, the relation thus developed between man and the world-transcending spirituality belongs wholly to the sphere of the spiritual life, it allows of the unfolding of a purely inward experience in which the soul communes with the totality of the spiritual life, as an I with a Thou. This inward experience will thus be more warm and intimate than any spiritual work can be. It will acquire, so to speak, a more personal character, if only we bear clearly in mind that the concept of personality is here only a sign and symbol for something that transcends alike words and concepts. That man here attains the utmost depth of inwardness may be further attested by the fact that at all times religion has contributed more than any other factor towards bringing about mutual understanding and spiritual intercourse among men. Religion, in the sense in which we are here regarding it, has been more effective than anything else both in combining men and in sundering them. Thus too we can explain the fact that those spheres of life which require a community of feeling and convictions, — as is notably the case with Art, — cannot prosper apart from religion.

As all religion in the characteristic sense springs from the desire to be freed from sorrow and sin, it must effect a conquest of these and, in so doing, must convert life into a great onward movement. This movement seeks to

press beyond sorrow, but can still allow a value to sorrow in so far as it rouses life from inertia and sloth, awakens longing in the soul, and thus paves the way for the uplifting into a new life. And if it be true that all unfolding of genuine spirituality rescues our life from the merely natural process and transforms it into personal deed, then the activistic tendency must become more marked when, through the stress of emotional upheaval, an ascent of man's nature is effected and a new life is laid hold upon. The more vigorously this movement develops, and the process of decision which it implies, the more certainly does life acquire a history of its own; the more possible does it become to speak of a history of the soul. Not only have the great religions viewed the universe for the most part from a historical standpoint, but religious movements have themselves become the soul of human history. They oppose with all their might the attempt to change reality into a mechanical process of nature. Freedom, — freedom at the root of life, — has no better ally than religion.

We cannot possibly assert that this new orientation makes life easier and more agreeable. For it lays the whole weight of the world's problem on the soul of man; it heightens the susceptibility to pain, since it makes a man live into the sorrow of others as though it were his own; it makes sin more serious, branding it as contradiction to a good and holy will, and it makes many things unsatisfactory which hitherto passed muster fairly well, — current morality, for instance. But the raising of the standard which is inherent in all this is at the same time a raising of life; and if there is much in religious movements which remains incomplete and obscure, yet, despite incompleteness and obscurity, there can be no

manner of doubt that in man, individually and collectively, there is something going on which lies beyond the range of caprice and doubt, that our life develops within great spiritual contexts and is in no way futile.

And this brings us to the point which does more than anything else to establish the power of religion over man. It is that religion, and religion alone, can satisfy completely his desire for spiritual self-preservation, the desire that his experiences and acts should have some unconditional and unlimited value. Let us take first the case of the individual. Nature treats him with complete indifference, as a mere point of transition. Fate uses him and then flings him aside. His human environment allows him, indeed, a certain value, but as a rule this is measured out grudgingly and passes into swift oblivion. How often is it brought home to us that no one is irreplaceable, and how urgently does all experience of life impress upon us the duty of resignation! And yet there is something in us which rebels against this conclusion as nerveless and senile, nay, rejects it even as spelling inward destruction. For the life-pressure which is here at work is not the mere natural impulse of self-preservation; still less is it a clinging to the petty self which through all chance and change would seek only to preserve its own comfort. The problem here is the maintenance and development of the spiritual life at this particular spot, the question whether we, — called upon to co-operate in the building-up of the universe, — are willing and able for the task. Here there is something going forward in man which actually asserts itself against him and holds him fast even against his will, though in the long run it is destined to capture his will also and dominate his striving. Here we are concerned

with the maintenance of something which does not affect merely ourselves, which, therefore, we dare not abandon because to do so would be to yield up a good entrusted to us and to desert our duty. The life-impulse herein operative might be called metaphysical, in opposition to the physical. When it ceases to act, then all that we do, all that we make out of ourselves, must be a matter of indifference. Its extinction would mean that we should be unable to keep our self-respect; we should have nothing to lean on, nothing by which to lift ourselves. Our life would be sham and deception and all our undertakings would be meaningless. But how comes it that we should always be seeking something beyond, seeking it with untiring passion, if that higher life-impulse were not already at work in us? Here, if anywhere, the seeking in itself proves to be already a possession, and Pascal's words are justified: "Thou wouldst not seek me, hadst thou not already found me."

It is, however, religion only, with its disclosure of a new life-depth and its offer of a sure foundation which can alike justify and satisfy this life-impulse. Thus the irresistible desire for self-preservation, for the maintenance of the spiritual life here and now, turns necessarily to religion. This was what Augustine meant by the words: "If I seek thee, my God, then I seek the blessed life; I will seek thee, that so my soul may live."

The problem affects in the first instance the individual soul, but it concerns also the whole of the human race. For here also the question arises whether all our trouble and work exhausts itself in pursuing the routine requirements of civilisation and thus passes aimlessly away, or whether, over against this routine, a spiritual self is acquired and with it a sense of the infinite in work.

This problem of spiritual self-preservation is the decisive consideration through which pre-eminently religion has attracted mankind in the past and is always renewing her hold. For here we are concerned with the primal source of life, with the fundamental axiom the affirmation or denial of which determines whether the spiritual life in man shall stand or fall. Affirmation means that everything is inverted and that we take up our position in a world which transcends alike nature and civilisation. This will always give offence in certain quarters and arouse contradiction. But so far as the opposition is successful, life falls a prey to disruption and must finally break up altogether. Man cannot for ever comply tamely with such a result, and thus the need for a spiritual self-preservation leads him back ever and again to religion. Denial itself must in the end become a road to affirmation, though often indeed with a very radical alteration in the original contention. In conclusion we may say that the apparently most venturesome hypothesis is here really the most certain, that on which the certainty of everything else depends.

Just as religion only found a secure settlement by boldly rising above what had hitherto seemed to be the whole reality, so also the distinctively religious life can develop only in independence of that lower reality and even in opposition to it. It therefore views life as a whole from its own peculiar standpoint. It is true that religion does not only rise above the world, but also returns to it and seeks to bring under its own rule the life there represented. But it soon becomes obvious that despite the inner transcendence resistance still remains, — remains and becomes still stronger as time goes on. Thus the struggle is permanent and there is no

prospect of its ever issuing in a clear victory on this human plane of ours. Life must seek its reward not so much in any definite conclusion to its work as in the fact that it is pressing forward through struggle and experience to new depths within itself, that it is making something more of itself, putting more energy and resolution into its fight with the hostile element. The progress of history, therefore, will never culminate in a millennium on this human plane of ours, but the content and the force of spirituality among men will be continually augmented and life lifted thereby to a higher level. But this conviction that the world is permanently incomplete and man's life permanently a struggle necessarily drives religion to look beyond the whole of this natural order and seek a meaning for the world not so much in itself as in its connexions. Thus life becomes a link in a more extended chain which we are unable to pursue further, — an act in a supra-historical drama whose course is hidden from human eyes. The religious imagination will throw off various pictures of what those further paths of life may be, but for life these are of secondary importance. Life is primarily concerned with the fact that religion may have the consciousness as it develops of being superior to the world around it, of carrying its supreme experiences within itself, — the consciousness of not being bound down to the standards of its environment, but of being able to measure the environment by its own standard. This is indispensable for religion if it is to rest secure within itself and develop a distinctive character of its own. It does not, therefore, change life into a hoping and waiting for a Beyond, but sets it in an independent spiritual order transcending alike the world and time, and regards this as the ultimate depth of

reality. The movement here is not from near to far, but from surface to depth; it is a seeking of itself. It is not a case of something new being added as an afterthought to a world already securely and firmly established. There is rather a complete reversal of valuation: what seemed at first sight to be secure is shown in the course of life's further development to be floating in uncertainty and urgently in need of a supporting groundwork. And it is just this which religion promises to give it.

But necessary as all this is, there can be no doubt that this new path takes us to the very limit of human capacity and human comprehension, not only as regards concepts, but also as regards feelings and the general tone of life. There is a danger here of slipping into vague indefiniteness, losing our connexions as we climb further and ever further, and finally becoming confused about everything. The religious movement in particular may be nothing more than a transient flash confined to the mere individual, an exuberant upwelling of the moment leaving no deeper trace behind it and hardly touching the real core of a man's nature. The necessity of meeting such dangers acts as a powerful incentive to the formation of a religious social circle which can seize upon the life as it wells up from its hidden depth and make it accessible to everybody, wrap men about in a distinctively spiritual atmosphere and oppose something firm and substantial to the haphazard fleeting quality of individual condition and caprice. The movement towards the formation of the religious community, — the Church, in fact, — is absolutely indispensable if religious impulse and emotion are to be translated into quiet fruitful work. This social bias, however, implies at the same time a historical bias. For men are never brought together by general

principles and ideas but only by historical events and experiences. Thus the religious life will receive tangible embodiment and individualised form, but at the same time it will be confronted with new tasks and new dangers. The visible embodiment may damage and dispossess the soul; the individualised form may contradict the fundamental content of the spiritual life. The individual may be stifled by his environment and the living moment by dependence on the past. These complications which we of to-day feel with especial keenness will have to receive our attention later. But however weighty they may be and however serious the reflexions to which they give rise, they cannot make us question the need for the formation of a religious community. Apart from it, a characteristic religion cannot possibly be maintained. We cannot consider a church as superfluous without either allowing religion to become thin and ineffective or else placing an overweening value on the spiritual capacity and truthfulness of individuals. If progressive minds to-day feel the Church to be mainly a weight and a hindrance, the fault lies not in the nature of the Church in general, but in the fact that the churches of the present day do not meet the needs of our present stage of development, that they are inwardly old and outworn. But this should urge us to a renewal of the churches, not to a rejection of them. If a thing be necessary in itself, then defects which may mar it for the moment cannot enable us to dispense with it altogether.

(*c*) *Retrospect and Summary*

Our view of religion did not confine itself to one plane. After securing a starting-point in the spiritual life, we passed through two stages even within the borders of

religion, — that of universal and that of characteristic religion. We saw that it was in this latter stage that religion first became independent and developed a thought-world of its own, and at the same time began to create a life-sphere of its own, whereas before it had only served to establish and deepen the spiritual life in general. But though there is necessarily a disposition to press beyond the universal religion, yet this latter may never become a mere transitional point, but must rather remain a permanent constituent of the religious life. Characteristic religion, shut up within itself, is apt to lose touch with life as a whole; in so doing, it not only becomes narrow and exclusive, but actually rejoices in such narrowness as separating it from the "wicked" world. This is the road to inward deadness and spiritual pride, to pietism and pharisaism. But such contraction carries its own penalty within itself. Religion not only ceases to have any strong influence on life, but through such separation it is apt to become to far too great an extent a mere froth and shimmer of subjective feeling, defenceless against the all-too-ready doubt which declares the whole thing to be a mere cobweb of man's brain. Thus in the course of further development, the original connexion should not be lost, and religion, in order to be strong and healthy, must always remain within a wider whole of life. Characteristic religion must work back into every branch of life through universal religion. Both types of religion must be constantly interacting in order that the life of religion may sustain a movement within itself and not develop character at the expense of breadth and breadth at the expense of character.

This ascent of the spiritual life generally to universal

religion, and from universal to characteristic religion, must not be understood as implying that each individual has to go through this movement in his own experience in order to participate in religion and be assured of its truth. Not only would this make religion the concern of a small company, an aristocracy of intellect, — whereas it is precisely religion which addresses itself to all men and the whole of mankind, — but this mode of reaching it would be apt to make it appear as a mere addendum, possessed of no original power. As a matter of fact, this is far from correct, and here again it becomes manifest that the experiences of religion are the same as those which belong to all spiritual life, only that they are here more clearly realised. For example, the way in which man works himself up to something in no way decides the quality of the experience to which the work conducts him; the manner of climbing does not affect the view which is reached upon the height. Something which is dependent on very various conditions and modes of communication may yet, when once it stands out clearly, make immediate appeal to us and display an original power. Were it not so, then all cultivation of the individual and all civilisation of mankind, — things which cause us so much trouble, — would be merely artificial adjuncts; they could never become part of our truly personal life. Life and history alike would be processes of growing always older and more senile. The life-process peels off, in the end, the husk which was indispensable to its development, and all the complexity of work yields place to the youthful freshness of first-hand experiences, which carry their confirmation within themselves. For in the long run it is life only which can prove the truth of life. Here also things are turned round:

real original experience, and with it genuine conviction, lies at the end of the road and not at the beginning. This emancipation of spiritual life from the method by which we reach it is effected in all departments of life, but most strikingly and radically in religion. For religion, looked at from the genetic point of view, has more pre-conditions than the other departments, and is, therefore, the most exposed to doubt and denial. Once attained to maturity, however, it is the most simple and original of them all, that which makes the most direct and intelligible response to man's concern for spiritual self-preservation, for a salvation of the soul.

With all its certainty, however, religion yet remains a matter of freedom and personal decision, — here also in complete accord with the other departments of spiritual creation. For none of these hold man by mechanical constraint; they demand that he shall enter freely into the movement for the furtherance of their aims. Only then do they communicate their experiences and give us to see the richness of their life; only then do they become convincing. Where the mind remains closed to their work and aims, they must seem mere illusions. How foolish the thinker must appear in his concern for scientific truth, or the artist in his care for artistic truth, when the whole ideal of truth leaves the soul completely cold! How unintelligible then seem all the results of the search after truth, how easy it is to refute them with shallow reasoning or biting mockery! In the case of religion the problem is still more serious, because here we are concerned not with developments of life along special lines, but with life as a whole. Here, in particular, it depends entirely upon our personal entry into the movement whether or not this development of life becomes

convincing and compelling. The entry is not forced upon anyone, but it is easy to show that to decline it robs life of its soul, and that only unthorough thinking can conceal the sharp Either-Or which runs through the whole of man's life and finds its clearest expression in religion. We are agreed, moreover, in regard to the world of thought, that our views of reality are limited by the altitude of our life's level. Thus a struggle for truth of conviction is pre-eminently a struggle for loftiness of life.

C. DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANSWER

Preliminary Considerations

If we now turn to Christianity as a matter of actual history, we must first of all consider what attitude our previous investigation forces us to adopt in dealing with a historical fact of this kind. To this end it is important to understand clearly both the relationship of Christianity to other religions, and that of the different forms of Christianity to each other. The convictions we have developed assign very definite limits to all historical achievement; within these limits, however, they allow it no mean importance. Its importance and its limits, taken together, give rise to a distinctive mode of treating the matter and open up great problems.

Our enquiry showed us that religion is before all else a common experience of mankind. We all feel the longing for spiritual self-preservation; we all share in the opening-up of a new life which this self-preservation entails. As all development of genuine spirituality in our human sphere depends in last resort upon this new movement, anyone who wishes to deprive man of his share in it would have to let him fall out of the spiritual world altogether. Therefore, we must most resolutely resist the claim of any one particular religion, Christianity included, to be the one and only true religion to the exclusion and rejection of all others. It is only necessary to think out the consequences of a claim of this kind in order to feel its monstrosity. Other religions besides

Christianity allow man to live and die in the belief that divine life is ruling within him and drawing him away and beyond himself. If now the manifestation of divinity be limited to Christianity, then this belief can be nothing more than a gross illusion; the supposed revelation becomes mere semblance and deception. And such a conclusion would seem quite tenable so long as man belonged wholly to an exclusive circle and rejected root and branch everything that lay outside it. That was the mediæval way, but it cannot be the way of our modern age. For its infinitely wider horizon and its delightful power of sympathising with human development over the widest possible area brings to our notice a wealth of other forms, and shows us so much honest striving in them, so much work and sacrifice, shows us too, amid all differences, so close a relationship in men's fundamental problems and experiences, that it becomes absolutely impossible to throw all this aside and see in it only a wandering from the true goal, only illusion, deception, and superstition. Yet it is only a confused thinking which can seek to take a middle course in this matter. If the divine power was not at work in those religions, then there was something undivine and anti-divine; everything in them was gross idolatry, and they were only caricatures of religion. But if we are to believe this, how dare we ground our culture upon classical antiquity which would seem on this hypothesis to have been all empty illusion to its very foundations? Will anyone with an intimate knowledge of the lifework of men such as Æschylus and Pindar, Plato and Plotinus, be bold enough to deny their deep piety and decry them as idolaters? Even in the early days, the leading Christian thinkers were eagerly intent on widening the scope of Christian-

ity, and making it pass beyond the sphere of its historical associations into an universal religion. The greatest thinker of Eastern Christianity, Origen, is of opinion that the love of God, whom he willingly calls "God over all" (ὁ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεός), embraces all times and nations, and that without Him nothing good happens among men. In Christianity, indeed, with its entry of the divine into the world, he sees the highest proof of this goodness, but for him it is only the climax of what has been going on through the whole history of humanity. It is to Augustine, however, the grandest spirit of Western Christianity that we owe the words: "What is now called Christian religion was in existence also among men of old time, and has never been lacking since the beginning of the human race, till Christ Himself appeared in the flesh (*in carne*). Since that time the true religion already in existence has begun to be called the Christian religion." To men who hold such convictions Christianity means something more than a limited historical work. And if it really means more, then the conception of a religion which takes in all the manifold varieties of religious life is at least brought very near. It cannot, therefore, be deemed an error when philosophy treats religion as a concern common to the whole of humanity and rejects every attempt to narrow it down to a particular clique as intolerable particularism.

But on the other hand we must do justice to the fact that it was only as embodied in historic forms that religion became an independent reality and acquired power to penetrate life. It is precisely our conception of religion as the opening-up of a new transcendent life which militates against any complete agreement of these various forms. If religion were a mere scheme of doc-

trines concerning things human and divine, a light thrown upon our human existence from a world above it, if the spiritual movement in general proceeded from concepts to life and not from life to concepts, then it would be at least conceivable that we should find ourselves agreed on certain fundamental doctrines and that we should seek to maintain everywhere that which we had won through common effort. But we have seen that the case is actually very different. In religion we are concerned with the attainment of a life which seizes upon us with overmastering force and lifts us beyond our original condition on to a new level. The needful thing here is a strong shock of upheaval, a break with the old, a spontaneous upwelling of fresh springs of life. But religion can attain to this power and influence only under quite special circumstances and conditions, only on those few pinnacles of history where a constraining power, becoming the primal inspiration of great personalities, has impelled life and effort away from all other cares and all the wavering uncertainties of reflective deliberation. It is only where spiritual and divine life thus breaks through that a fire has been kindled which could burn through the centuries, only thus that a unity has arisen, sole of its kind, which could stamp all the manifold varieties of life with a common impress, thereby creating a unique type, and, through the aims it thus disclosed, welding human effort firmly together through the long chain of the centuries. Is it not falling into a void to cut oneself adrift from this further specification and individualisation of religious life?

The matter would be simple enough and might be taken as already decided, if there were only one kind of historic individualisation, but, as it happens, there are

many, and what is right for the one must be right for the others also. Or are we, when faced by the plurality of religions, to assert the truth of the particular one in which we happen to have been born and to defend it with all the passion of our being? To use a phrase of Rousseau's, is our belief to be a matter of geography, and are we to be rewarded for being born in Rome and not in Mecca? As conscious and reflective beings we cannot do other than survey, compare, and measure. But if we seek a standard of measurement, we can find none other than the service which the particular religion has rendered to the general religious problem; that is to say, the individualisation which will seem most valuable to us, the one to which we shall seek to attach ourselves, will be that which takes in the widest area of religious life and shows the greatest power of leading beyond mere general outlines, — that which makes religion most completely real both for the individual and for humanity. Christianity, no less than other religions, must submit to this test.

To this problem of the place of Christianity among the religions, there is allied also the further problem of the relationship of the particular forms of Christianity to each other. Various forms have arisen, and all lay claim to the possession of the Christian truth and the Christian life; but this produces a similar complication to that which we met before in dealing with the different religions. It seems as though none of the particular Christian confessions can command full devotion or stimulate energy to its utmost, unless it is convinced that it is the best and even the only legitimate representative of Christian truth, the others being all inferior and degenerate. But if this idea be really taken seriously, — as

Roman Catholicism in particular shows considerable disposition to take it, — then there grows up a harshness of judgment which is quite intolerable. For the other confessions may then be regarded not as lawful competitors, but as illegal usurpers, perverters of the truth, and therefore as irreconcilable adversaries to be exterminated root and branch. He who shrinks from such harsh judgment is compelled to seek a wider conception of Christian truth and Christian life, to lift them on to a higher platform than that of creeds and formularies, and thus cultivate more friendly relations with other churches. But supposing he does this, supposing he looks upon the different churches as mere temporary manifestations, as individualisations of a general Christian movement, then how can we avoid asking whether the movement has exhausted itself in these forms, and whether perhaps those great historical changes which we have convinced ourselves are now at work do not come into conflict with our present systems and urgently drive us to seek new ones?

Thus the question whether we can still be Christians splits up into two questions. In the first place we must come to a clear understanding as to whether the religious formation which we find in Christianity has really the fundamental content which will enable it to maintain itself as the supreme climax of religious life, in face of all the attacks and opposition which it must encounter to-day, and whether the changes which it must undergo really promise to strengthen rather than weaken its power and truth; and further there arises the question whether the forms in which Christianity is at present enshrined are really capable of including the truth-content of the life which has been gradually growing up anew in the movements and experiences of the last few

centuries, — whether our very anxiety for the full strength and effectiveness of the Christian life does not drive us to seek something beyond them.

For the treatment of these questions our previous investigations offer certain definite points of support. We convinced ourselves as to the distinctive aim of Christianity and we saw also what misgivings and opposition it was exciting in the modern world. We convinced ourselves again that this modern world, despite the great and lasting achievements for which it is responsible, yet shows itself unskilled and vacillating when dealing with ultimate questions on unassailable ground, whereas on points where it professes competence it is extremely open to attack and can hardly do other than depress and destroy life. This maze of intersecting movement drove us to an independent consideration of the problem in abstraction from the special conditions of the age. We then found that religion became extremely valuable to us, but the question still remained unsettled as to how far this valuation might apply to its historical development and our relation to this development. Not only must all this be kept in mind during our enquiry and investigation, but it is also important to be particularly careful that it shall not be our own subjective opinions and valuations which are allowed to find expression and bias our decision, but rather the movements and changes of our common life as they unfold in the world's history, — changes which have altered not so much man's condition and mood as the constitution of the spiritual life. Only in the practice of such restraint is there a hope of counteracting the manifold dangers which an undertaking of this kind entails.

It is however our intention first of all to run through the main points in which the unique character of Christianity was more especially brought out, and then to investigate briefly its general position and the demands which the maintenance of that position involves.

I. The Just Claims of Christianity and its Capacity for Renewal

1. Christianity had brought support and comfort to mankind in a troublous age. Resolutely inverting the primitive condition of things, it made religion with its God-turned gaze and its God-filled life the one main controlling factor whence it proceeded to fashion all life. In pursuit of this aim it gave rise in mediæval times to an all-inclusive religious civilisation whose effects reach right down to the present day. But the main trend of modern thought has been offering an ever more effective opposition to this conception and limitation of life. The world has acquired greater value in man's eyes, attracted him more strongly and at the same time incited him to greater personal activity, giving him more to discover, more to develop, and making him find his full satisfaction therein to an ever increasing extent. But it was impossible for the immediate environment to become thus his familiar home, the place where he felt himself most at ease, without the other world losing its lustre and the divine becoming a mere deepening and accompaniment of the cosmos till at last it seemed to vanish altogether. At the same time there grew up a feeling of antagonism to a merely religious system of life and its control of all human things. Gradually and often by hard struggle the other departments of

life won independence. It seemed as though they must have this independence and abandon their continual blandishing and ogling of religion before they could develop with fidelity and clearness the truth-content latent within them. A movement of this kind could appeal to a common reason indwelling in all men, — reason not merely as a critical but also as a positive and constructive power. In such reason there was naturally involved the desire for a universal culture embracing and inspiring all individual departments. The old religious system came to be regarded from this point of view as intolerably narrow, just as the individual also found the merely religious form of life too narrow.

These are changes which must be reckoned with by everyone who seeks to keep abreast of the times, — changes not in individuals merely, but in the whole life of humanity, affecting not mainly subjective feeling but the essential character of work. Admitting all this, however, the question still remains whether these changes are final and conclusive, or whether they themselves do not rather give rise to new complications. It is quite true that there has been a greater output of activity in our immediate environment, and that this has given a heightened value to the world around us. But our own investigations have shown how little this activity avails to fill the deep need of the soul and how the restless haste for increase of power leaves life, in the long run, absolutely empty. The modern growth of activity provokes inevitably two questions, two demands: the activity, if it is to mean the advance of the whole man, must rise to the height of spiritual creation, and again, if it is to overcome inner restlessness and senseless hurry, it must win a counterpoise: it must rest in eternal

verities and find peace of soul. But this deepening, completing process can never be supplied by the machinery of this present world, effective though it be. It can come only through rising above it, that is, by turning to religion. It is just here that we strike the essential difference between the temper of our own time and that of early Christianity. That tired and listless age sought every possible excuse for suspension of its own activity. It sought rest, in opposition to activity, as a sure haven from the storms of life, and found this rest in God alone. "Thou hast created us for Thyself and our heart is restless till it rest in Thee" (Augustine). We on the other hand are full of a strong vitality. In the progress of activity we find the hope and joy of our lives. We cannot possibly cease to act, and give ourselves up to calm repose. If the divine power is to manifest itself to us, it must do so not in opposition to activity but within it, by deepening, ennobling, and spiritualising it. Nowhere does divinity seem more present than in the process whereby this activity acquires an independent status, a being-for-self.

The development of this point of view gives us a new type of religious life. It demands a more active kind of religion, in which divine and human are no longer so opposed that he who would rightly honour God must perforce entertain a low opinion of man. Here rather the ennobling of man is regarded as a work of God. Freedom and grace no longer stand in opposition but are complementary aspects of one and the same process. A consciousness of power is no longer incompatible with reverence, but the two sentiments demand and help each other. Thus a more manly, upright, joyful type of life replaces the older devotion which seems

to us cringing and servile. This greater activity, however, is in no wise opposed to the real spirit of Christianity. If Christianity concerned itself primarily with suffering rather than with action, that was largely due to the special conditions of its time. Moreover, Christianity was very far from looking upon suffering as a dull endurance. In suffering it discovered a more hidden form of activity out of which it developed a new life. It did not value sorrow and hindrance for their own sake, but only as they deepened life. Thus in that atmosphere the saying could well arise that suffering is the climax of activity (*passio summa actio*). If in the course of history this active side may often have become obscured, it has again and again been brought into prominence. The Reformation here plays an important part, for its essential spirit finds expression chiefly in its rejection of all blind devotion and the committal of the soul mainly to its own experience. To-day we are driven yet further than the position taken up by the Reformation, since this movement, particularly in its Lutheran form, restricted activity too closely to inward experience and left the wicked world to its own ways or to the dispensations of Providence. We on the other hand are concerned to see that the divine power shall manifest itself more vigorously in the world around us and permeate it through and through. So much is certain, that a higher estimate of activity and a more manly type of life do not imply a break with the main tendency of Christian life, but only a further development of it.

At the same time our position towards the world undergoes a change. We saw how modern thought demanded a closer contact between world and God, and sought it within the world rather than outside of it.

This tendency explains the power of pantheism in the spiritual life of to-day, the magic which lies in the word "immanence." The world has become far more to us; revealed infinitely more beauty, coherence, and life; we can no longer find any pleasure in touching wails over its wickedness. But we saw too that this growth of the world's power was made possible only through the working of a spiritual life above it and beneath it, a life which fashioned it and found itself again in it. Therefore pantheism, with its identification of world and God, must seem to us merely a misinterpretation and perversion of the facts. That the Godhead is more actively at work in the world, as our modern era has begun to perceive, gives no ground for affirming that it loses itself in the world. Transcendence is essential to the idea of divinity. If the world is the whole of reality, then there is no longer any room for a God. Pantheism must be resolutely put aside on this ground above all others, that it is a vacillating compromise which obscures the great problem and saps life's energy. It suffers from half-heartedness. It desires something more than the mere juxtaposition of objects which constitutes the world of sense-experience, and it emphasises its rejection of all crass materialism, but it shrinks from according to this "something more," any independent status, any existence in its own right. It wishes it to remain so reticent, so modest, so shadowy, as not to alter the constitution of things or bind life in any way at all, so that we can in fact scarcely find a trace of it save when it becomes important to cover up deficiencies with a little ornament. As a matter of fact the experiences of the nineteenth century give particularly poor justification for the pantheistic concep-

tion of reality as a realm of pure reason. For we look at nature very differently from our forefathers. It no longer seems to us a realm of soulful harmony and blessed peace, but rather a complex riddle, the arena on which a perpetual struggle for existence is being enacted. Men, too, in the wild vortex of political and social struggles, lose the romantic glory of former days; and even the exaltation of personality so usual to-day, of its grandeur, dignity, and so on, — unless grounded on something greater and deeper, — becomes merely a hollow and irrelevant phrase, especially in an age which so forces upon our notice the smallness and self-seeking of man. As things stand, the only choice is between theism and atheism. Theism, however, may take different forms, and we are indeed forced through our work and experience to-day to strive after a new form. But the Either-Or is not thereby removed nor its force weakened.

The changed direction in which man seeks reality, — expressed by pantheism, however crookedly and imperfectly, as regards the cosmic outlook, — extends also to life's work and gives rise here to still greater complications. As our tasks within the world grow constantly more exacting and claim more and more of our energy, we are impelled to look for God in close connexion with human life rather than in some transcendental relation to it. The specifically religious element pales before our activity in the human sphere. The phrase of Novalis "Amid men must man seek God" is, when understood in this sense, a confession of our modern faith. But here again we are liable to the error of glorifying the human as we find it in everyday experience, without any reference to remoter depths, and

of making it the end and aim of all activity. Thus the movement in the direction of a socialistic culture which is so widespread to-day is only valuable and justifiable when it keeps within the setting of the spiritual and at the same time the religious life; it leads into error and delusion the moment it severs itself from this and pretends to completeness in itself. For what further goal then remains save man's well-being and comfort, the path to which leads inevitably into weakness and epicureanism? Life becomes also a prey to the illusion that numbers, of themselves, can raise the inward level, that quantity can without further ado be transmuted into quality, an illusion which the impressions and experiences of our own day are surely sufficient to dissipate. Plato somewhere says that the State can only be rightly guided by the man who knows something higher than the State. Similarly, we might say that only he who knows something higher than human nature can truly help man and humanity. Though there may be good reason then why modern effort should seek to turn religious activity mainly in the direction of man, yet if it reject in the process everything that leads beyond the merely human, if it transform all culture into merely humanistic culture, then the whole movement must tend to the production of an unspeakably dead level, and socialistic culture must prove irreconcilably antagonistic not only to religion, but also to all genuinely spiritual culture. Thus it is extraordinarily important that whilst the immanental movement should maintain its rights even in the world of work, yet the divine transcendence through which alone things human acquire their value should at the same time be carefully guarded.

Another point of importance was the position of re-

ligion in the whole field of life. The modern world in its development broke through the narrow bounds of a purely religious system and placed the other departments of life on an independent footing. Once possessed of this, they have driven religion further and further back, and often even contested her right to any place whatsoever. But great as has been the gain to life in added richness and mobility, complications have also made their appearance which forbid our passing as yet any final verdict. The sections of culture into which life is thus split up, — scientific, technical, economic, and so on, — all have their own different lines and pull man now hither, now thither. He cannot transcend these oppositions, unless he work his way upward to a totality of culture and find some task which belongs to man's nature as a whole. Our investigation of the spiritual life has shown us that it is possible to do this, but it has shown us at the same time that grave problems here make their appearance, and that we cannot solve them without a radical transformation of primitive conditions and without turning to religion for help. Apart from that help, there can be no possibility of making a whole out of life, no chance for concentration to keep pace with expansion.

Thus religion remains even for the man of to-day an essential constituent of life, but its position has certainly undergone no inconsiderable change. It stands now within a comprehensive whole of life, and is invested with the supremely important task of giving it a soul, but at the same time it may not break loose from its setting and aspire after direct control of the other departments, or again make for itself a special sphere for which it claims a peculiar sanctity. The former

is rather the tendency of Catholicism, the latter of ecclesiastical Protestantism. As against the former we may note that though religion may indeed claim to influence all departments of life, yet this influence, if it is not to be an oppressive burden and stumbling-block, must remain indirect, must be conveyed through the medium of life as a whole. If religion is to dictate outright to the other departments of life, — science in particular, — as to their proper aims, then we must have a very poor estimate of these departments, and especially of science, if we do not feel that they are being subjected to unseemly humiliation and serious wrong. It is true that the free development of life's various branches must give us cause to expect much complication and error, but if above all there is a whole of life, then we must fight such error from the standing-ground of this whole. No one could fear that religion would suffer any serious damage from this freedom of movement, if he once recognised its independent and primal character. If it really possess this, as we convinced ourselves was the case, then it is at bottom a want of faith to shrink back from the struggle and prefer a safe, *i.e.* an apparently safe, tranquillity.

But an isolation of religion should be opposed no less strenuously than an intermeddling of religion. Such isolation brings with it a twofold evil. There is a danger for religion itself, lest it lose connexion with the roots whence it draws its vitality and thus become stiff and formal, and there is a danger for man lest he shut himself off from everything that lies outside this narrow circle, and even look upon such narrowness as particularly meritorious. Every attempt to shape life exclusively from the point of view of one particular

branch of it brings about inevitably its decadence and decline and finally endangers its truth. This is as certain for religion as it is for art and for science; the case of religion is none the better because in its isolation it affects superiority and takes the name of God upon its lips.

Thus we have seen how the historical situation requires that religion to-day shall occupy a different position from that which it formerly held in the economy of life. But if it can no longer dominate as it used to do, it does not thereby become just one option among others; if it has more enemies to fight without, it does not thereby lose its inner certainty. No breach with Christianity is implied in the new development we are here striving after. The problem with which we are concerned is the old and abiding problem of the relation of religion to life. Within Christianity itself various forms of solution are attempted and various solutions are to-day found side by side. Thus further attempts cannot be deemed *a priori* as a breaking away from the whole Christian scheme, and we demand in the interests of Christianity itself that they shall be allowed a free course.

2. Christianity is a religion of the spirit. It asserts in a peculiarly forceful way the fundamental concept common to all the higher religions of the superiority of the spiritual life; it has also lifted moral action on to a plane which transcends all natural impulse. As, in its conception of creation, it makes nature spring in last resort from spirit, so it regards too the unfolding of nature's processes as above all else the manifestation of spiritual power and wisdom. Against this view the modern world entered most vigorous protest. Not only did nature become more independent and demand

her own rights, but her claims soon extended back into the spiritual life itself, till finally she put forward her own world as supreme and explained everything spiritual as being a mere annex and, in fact, her own production. When all spiritual life thus came to be regarded as a merely human phenomenon, and man as an isolated and limited being, it seemed an unpardonable piece of anthropomorphism to interpret the world from the spiritual standpoint and subject it to spiritual aims. Changes such as these, however, meant the extinction of all possibility of a religion.

This was a dangerous attack, but still more dangerous than the attack on spirituality in general was an attack on the distinctively Christian conception of the spiritual life, — more dangerous because it arose from within and in the interests of the spiritual life itself. The Christian conception, with the stress it lays on soul-inwardness and personal relationships, becomes much too small and narrow to suit the spirit of modern culture; it seems too closely associated with the human desire for happiness and human ways in general to be able to cut loose from these and control the universe. Modern thought, therefore, holds that genuine spiritual life can only be reached when we widen out and rise above this human and personal conception, to which the foremost leaders of modern movements are directly antagonistic, — Spinoza, for example, and Hegel. Thought, in particular, they regard as able to develop an independent character and strength greater than man's, able in fact to prove itself a cosmic force. Comprehensive complexes of ideas come into being, display a distinctive content, and endow themselves with a power of movement. Instead of obeying man, they on their side make him their ser-

vant and use his faculties for their own ends. Thus men have spoken, and still speak, of ideas that mould the world's history. To-day, for example, we hear much about social ideas which give direction to the efforts of the community and bind individuals together with compelling force. The personal glow of the spiritual life yields place to something objective and impersonal: it is the compelling necessity of the thing itself which is to decide everything; it is in the subjugation of everything personal to these objective demands that life first attains its highest level. The result is that not only must cosmic concepts which are framed from the point of view of the spiritual life change in the direction of impersonality, and the idea of a personal God also meet with the strongest opposition, — but the essential constitution of life must also be transformed, so that instead of a deed it becomes rather an event, a process. The unavoidable loss in warmth and spiritual intimacy seems to be far outweighed by the gain in breadth, power, and objective truth. Thus the matter still stands to-day, and we ask ourselves how, in face of all these countermovements alike from without and within, the human and personal tone of Christianity can be justified and maintained.

We may say here at the outset that from the very beginning Christianity's main endeavour was not directed towards securing unconditional happiness for man as he is; it sought first and foremost to make something new out of him, and it was only to the renewed man that it promised a genuine happiness, that is to say, peace and blessedness. It does not value man at all as mere man, but only as a member of a moral order. The ethical problem will have to engage our attention shortly; at this juncture the chief thing to remember is

that Christianity itself contains much that serves to counteract a purely ethical conception of life in the sense in which the word is generally used. How could it have diverged so decidedly from Judaism if it did not proclaim a unity of human nature and divine, therewith putting a check on moralism and taking a step in the direction of metaphysics? From this point onwards through the whole course of Christianity, two streams of thought have run along side by side, — one ethical and one speculative. They give rise not only to different thought-worlds and different conceptions of God, but also to different types of life. The ethical type strives after emancipation from all sin and a personal relationship to God, and regards conduct based on right feeling as the highest goal of life. The speculative, on the other hand, seeks to escape from the isolating, fluctuating character of man's immediate existence into the eternal unity, and to find, in the union of his being with the source of all reality, unutterable blessedness and a peace which is not of this world. Here life culminates not in moral conduct, but in mystical contemplation with its "divinising" of man. To the moralist, God is the holy and benevolent personality; to the mystic, on the other hand, He is the Absolute Being, beyond the reach of human thought, and cannot possibly be conceived as personal. In the life of the Church, the ethical bias predominates; the speculative has found its outlet in mysticism, but its influence reaches far beyond this particular setting, and, as an inspiring background, affects the whole of the Christian life. Greek and Roman Catholicism have been particularly successful in keeping firm hold on both tendencies and allowing each to influence the other. That ecclesiastical Protestantism has

let mysticism drop cannot in our opinion be regarded as telling in its favour. But greatly as this dual tendency has contributed to the widening of life, yet when once the historical consciousness is awakened and a clearer insight won into the characteristic features of the diverse formations of human life, it becomes impossible to rest content in the traditional view with its dual conception of God, its twofold rendering of life, and its easy tolerance of a personal and an impersonal scheme of life side by side. Thus the effort to transcend this duality is really a response to a problem which is inherent in Christianity itself, but such an effort becomes possible when we start from the concept of the spiritual life as that which includes and concentrates all the characteristic features of human existence.

It must not be imagined, however, that human life and effort must always have to choose between a warm, but somewhat narrow and stupid, personal type, and an impersonal alternative which, though broad, is cold and soulless. Our previous enquiry has enabled us to see that every act of spiritual creation involves a transcendence of this opposition, inasmuch as it does not leave the objective element outside itself, but absorbs and thereby ensouls it, while at the same time it develops the subjective side and unites it with the other to form a new life. The tendency here is to lift both subjective and objective to a higher level and thus pass beyond the cleavage and arrive again at a unity, — a unity, however, which no longer stands within an opposition, but embraces and co-ordinates both sides of it. Thus we must strive to get beyond the conflict between impersonality and a personality humanly conceived to a deeper conception of personality as unfolding a spiritual

character, seeking to reconcile the ethical movement with the speculative, and counteracting the tendency of human life to fall, as it does to-day, into the extremes of vague subjectivity or soulless work. Here we see a movement towards the very same goal which is presented to Christianity, — a life-unity that is both inclusive and transcendent. That we should cling to the word "personal" as descriptive of that unity is not due to any love of the mere word, which we could easily consent to drop. It is due rather to that which lies behind the word. Thinkers such as Leibniz and Kant, whom no one can accuse of a crass anthropomorphism, have used it to designate the transcendence of the spiritual life. We desire to retain it in order that the spiritual may be understood and recognised as an active element, and the divine as self-determining life, not as the mysterious, dreamy, enchained process which romanticism conceived it to be. But our object becomes imperilled, or at least obscured, if once we designate and treat the ultimate cause of things as impersonal. Because concepts drawn from human life do not satisfy us completely, we must not, therefore, sink back upon something infra-human, as has so often happened and is happening in many quarters to-day.

It is indeed true that the desire for a new and transcendent unity affects very seriously the shaping of our lives; and religion, in particular, must undergo very considerable modifications. It must penetrate further back than the immediate psychical state, and make this the expression of a greater spiritual depth. It must develop more spiritual substance instead of fostering subjective excitement. It will also exercise much greater restraint in its concepts, and emphasise more

strongly the symbolic character of all man's statements about God. History, however, shows very distinctly that the clear consciousness of the inadequacy of all human concepts goes eminently well with a vigorous religious life. It was Plotinus who first made it perfectly clear that all man's statements about the supreme Being were mere simile, but there is scarcely any other great thinker, even within Christianity itself, who had so genuine and powerful a religious experience.

In the spiritual life, moreover, we recognised a new stage of reality in which the whole of the universe reveals its depth to man and calls upon him to share in its working. Once it has thus awakened in him and become his own deed, he knows himself to be in possession of a world, and, in the maintenance of the spiritual life in his own experience, in the winning of a soul for his life, he finds a task which is far above all subjective excitement and all selfish desire for happiness.

But once a world thus opens to us from within and gives our life a cosmic character, we can forthwith offer a successful resistance to the encroachments of nature and its domination of spirituality. To the world which presses on us from without, we are now able to oppose this new world. It is true that at the same time far more importance is to be attributed to nature. The fact that in these modern days nature has acquired a more independent status and has shown her capacity by the prodigious extent of her output entitles her to play a more important part in our lives, and forbids our following the precedent of early Christianity in annexing the great realm of nature so closely and directly to the spiritual life.

This becomes particularly apparent when we are dealing with the question of miracles of a physical order.

The denial of these affects very profoundly the constitution of historical Christianity, but this consideration cannot warrant a refusal to admit what is necessary. In this matter different trains of thought meet together and mutually strengthen each other. The fact that to-day we are not quite so confident of the uniformity of all natural process as we were a little while ago does not lessen our objection to such a violation of nature's order as is implied in miracles. A miracle which sets itself in opposition to the whole structure of the universe must, at the very least, be attested with absolute certainty and put beyond all possibility of doubt. But we know to-day how difficult such proof is, and, on the other hand, we have a more accurate understanding of the exuberance of the religious imagination. We know how easily it soars beyond the limits of experience and finds in its environment a ready disposition to credit even its boldest creations.

That on which religion really depends and must always depend is something quite different. Regarded from the naturalistic standpoint, it is an inner miracle, the appearance of a new order of life, a new stage of reality; it is the process in which the spiritual life becomes independent. Now as this independence was the guiding thought and main result of our whole enquiry, we can simply appeal to it here without further argument. If the spiritual life has been shown to be independent in virtue of its own content and its own power, then the mere fact that it develops in man under natural conditions, and that he is altogether most closely knit with nature, cannot raise any doubt on the main issue. We may of course fall victims to the mistake of confounding the conditions of a process with its creative cause.

It is a mistake often made to-day, but its usualness is no justification. To repeat an error does not lift it to the rank of truth.

If, however, the uniqueness and independence of the spiritual life are once established beyond doubt, then the difficult question arises of the relation between nature and spirit. Here there are only two possibilities, not three, as lovers of vague compromise imagine. Either nature is the root of all reality, in which case spirit is a mere accompaniment or by-product, or else the essential thing is spirit and nature is but a phase or stage in its development. The third theory, — that of complete equality or complete parallelism, to use a frequent but somewhat warped metaphor, — is absolutely impossible, as impossible as to give two centres of gravity to one body. In truth, neither past nor present endeavours have ever succeeded in establishing a complete equality. One could offer a prize for the discovery of anything of the kind and there would be small danger of ever being required to give it. For one of the two, either nature or spirit, will always remain of primal importance, while the other is explained in the light of it. What passes to-day as monism is far from being a settlement of the opposition; on the contrary, it stands wholly on the side of nature; it believes that natural concepts can be so widened as to include the spiritual life, and it fails to see that all that is distinctive and valuable in spiritual life is lost in the process. The main reason for this failure is that it conceives the psychical life as being merely a sum-total of manifestations in individuals, and it leaves out of count the larger connexions which it sets up in the life of the world and the new goods and values to which it gives rise.

Our investigation, on the other hand, showing as it does that in the move towards spirituality life proceeds from a kingdom of mere connexions to one of spiritual freedom, has made spirit into the very heart of reality. Thus we range ourselves on the side of the spiritual and seek our ultimate explanation not by moving from nature to spirit, but from spirit, rather, to nature. That the spiritual should make its appearance among us at a later stage of development, presenting itself as a kind of final chapter, does not alter the situation in the slightest, for we are not concerned with its outward position, but rather with the question whether this apparently final chapter is merely a continuation of the earlier one, or whether it brings in something new. If the latter alternative be the true one, — and we have seen that it is, — then the end becomes a fresh beginning; the independent primal quality of the spiritual life is not threatened in any way; the idea of development no longer signifies that all later manifestations must be referred back to initial forces, but the inward level may rise as the movement proceeds. This, moreover, involves the further possibility that something which appears at a later stage of the movement may really be the guiding power controlling it from the outset. To sum up, everything in last resort hinges on the simple question whether the opening-up of the spiritual life brings about a fresh primal experience or not. If it does, then the many riddles still involved in the relationship of nature to spiritual life cannot shake this fundamental conviction; if it does not, then it is folly to speak of man's greatness and dignity, or expect him to achieve new tasks.

We must, however, insist most emphatically that the superiority ascribed to spirit need in no wise involve a

disparagement of nature, either in our views of the world or in the practical work of life. The only thing which we must energetically resist as tending to reduce life's energy is a confusion of spirit with nature which mixes up the two ideas and believes it quite possible and easy to transmute mere natural impulses into spiritual values. To unravel this confusion satisfactorily, we must first of all distinguish clearly between nature and spirit, so that each stage may define itself clearly. But when we have once assured the superiority of spirit, it is well that we should return to nature. For without it, man cannot find his own perfection. He must appropriate nature in order to develop the needful life-force. If we wish to see how that which at first seems purely sensory can yet, when transplanted into the soul, work for the furtherance of spirit and the ennoblement of life, we shall find irresistibly convincing evidence in the observation of art with its wealth of creative production. Art, while giving us, to use Goethe's words, the most blessed assurance of the eternal harmony of existence, strengthens at the same time our conviction that, in spite of all the complications of existence, spirit and nature do not, in last resort, fall asunder, but constitute one cosmos under the rule of spirit. Corresponding to this rule of the spirit, there must be a religion of the spirit.

3. On scarcely any point does modern thought come into such harsh collision with traditional Christianity as in regard to the problem of redemption. We are so full of the consciousness of our own strength that we can hardly even tolerate the conception. Just when our closer union in the fellowship of work makes us stronger and more effective than ever we were and we

find ourselves ever pressing on to new heights, why should we despair of our own powers and invoke outside help? Why not stand upright, instead of bending the knee and craving as a boon what our own manly courage can secure for us? This change of mood brings out very clearly the wide gulf between an age that is old and weary and one that is full of youthful aspiration. We should ask ourselves, however, whether such an explanation is exhaustive and whether there is not a permanent problem which is independent of time's changes, a problem which may alter as regards detail but can never permanently disappear.

Undoubtedly there is much in the old way of conceiving redemption which savours of old-world weakness and weariness, and cannot be adopted by the man of to-day unless he be disloyal to himself. We must not indeed forget that even the older conception has its harsher and milder forms. When the harsher form tells us that man is totally depraved and abandoned, and can be redeemed only through supernatural grace without any co-operation on his own part, then it is scarcely possible to regard him as being one and the same person after the change as he was before it. Life loses all inner connexion and falls into detached fragments. In this case the crucial turning-point may very well appear as the removal of a load which oppresses man, as pardon and reconciliation, rather than as a renewal and uplifting of life. This may tranquillise us, but tranquillity is not power, and without power life cannot advance.

But whatever evils are involved in this conception are for the most part very much mitigated when brought into contact with the realities of life. There some place

has always been recovered for man's own working. The very consciousness of being lifted above his own weakness and uncertainty and being supported and guided entirely by divine power has often, as history bears witness, been the means of unloosing man's highest energies. The reformed Church, in particular, with its doctrine of predestination, shows us how possible it is for a contradiction in thought to remain when in life it has been already transcended.

It cannot, however, be denied that the traditional way of conceiving redemption favours a too passive and often too anthropomorphic kind of religion. It leaves divine and human too harshly opposed; the negative element in it is apt to outweigh the positive. There is also a danger that, if carried out with perfect consistency and sincerity, it may sap our courage in dealing with life, while, if taken less strictly and echoed mechanically as a kind of formula, it may give rise to inward insincerity. Is not pietistic thought, for instance, simply fostering insincerity when it seeks to awaken a consciousness of sin in the child? Or again when it demands from a young progressive age the confession of man's complete nothingness and worthlessness? The fundamental error in this is that convictions and feelings which should be the fruit of personal experience and the culmination of life's work are imposed upon life at the outset, and that man's limitations and incapacity are pressed home on him before the strength and courage to face life have been awakened.

But we must ask ourselves whether, in spite of all such dangers, there is not in the idea of redemption an abiding and necessary truth, — the truth, namely, that genuinely spiritual activity is never the work of the

mere isolated individual, and that the more his life, and that of humanity generally, shares in the intricacies of the spiritual life, the more it shapes itself into a struggle for the winning of a soul, so much the more clearly does he realise the living presence of a higher power and feel that it is sustaining and guiding him. Nor is this experience gained through a mere deepening of contemplative insight. The old nature must be broken up and the soul raised to heights not reached before. It is just when the divine is not poured into the human like some element from outside, but is understood as an awakening of the soul's most intimate being, that it stands furthest from the merely human level with its restricted capacities and aims, and is even strongly opposed to it.

A conviction of this kind, for which our whole enquiry has stood sponsor, is in no way shaken by the experiences of modern days, but rather confirmed and strengthened by them. It is true that our age has developed a wide range of powers and achieved results through the exercise of man's own capacity, in deliberate rejection of all wider connexions. To this extent modern life has been a new struggle of the Titans, an attack of humanity on the Godhead. But a closer examination showed us that all this capacity of man is exercised along one particular line and involves an inward limitation, that it falls into error if once it oversteps this limit and that, in laying claim to finality and completeness, it drags life down to a lamentably low level. It is true that men have become of late more closely united in their work, but this union has been far from engendering a harmony of souls and a common world of ideas. While outwardly men are being pressed more closely together, they are inwardly falling ever farther asunder. The conditions

and circumstances of life have undergone a tremendous expansion, but in spite of all the advance in wealth, mobility, and enjoyment, life has not gained any independent content and any joy in its own existence. The contrast of outward wealth with inward poverty has made the void all the more keenly felt, and engendered a growing discomfort. The life-tide has risen incessantly and its pace grown ever swifter. But if there is nothing to counterbalance the movement, if there is no superior power at work changing the mere sequence and succession into a time-embracing present, if life is devoid of all spiritual self-immediacy, then it loses all inward coherence and we become creatures of the moment, dependent on the moment and perishing with the moment. All this is continually destroying the spiritual character of life and forcing us amid all our successes to struggle for the preservation of the soul. It is also fostering a growing desire for a life that is more than mere devotion to toil and temporal interests, a life which draws from the inward and the eternal. But wherever such a desire grows strong, man is no longer quite so certain of his divinity, and the power of a life at work within him is ever impelling him beyond his limitations and urging him to seek deeper sources of life. It becomes clear that humanity is too small when it wishes to be sufficient unto itself. And this means a reappearance of the problems which lie at the root of the idea of redemption.

4. The time has gone by in which all attempts to dispute Christianity came to grief on the adamantine rock of Christian morality. Modern thought, as we have seen, has levelled its very sharpest attacks upon the dominating position which Christianity assigns to

morality and the particular way in which it has conceived of morality. As regards the reproach of softness and mildness, we must certainly allow that this quality cannot possibly supply all life's ethical needs, and has therefore at all times required supplementing even within Christianity itself. Otherwise it would have been impossible to uphold any state organisation, impossible also to oppose any resistance to destructive powers. But to say that the specifically Christian morality cannot be everything does not prove it to be inferior and superfluous, or even refute its claim to assume the direction of life. In so far as ethical valuations come in at all, in contradistinction from mere natural process, the question centres mainly round the opposition of justice and love. We cannot do without justice; but that justice may not have the final word is clearly shown even in classical antiquity where it attained its maximum development. For its fundamental idea, that the treatment and status of men should be in accordance with their achievement, is, really, the life-philosophy of the strong and fortunate. The weaker are ground down callously under the wheel of fate. A measureless love, a cherishing and fostering of the small and tender, a "reverence for that which lies beneath us" (Goethe) has no place here. We are simply members of a closed system: our achievement is the measure of our fate which cannot be altered. In Christianity quite other influences come into play. To reproach it with having glorified weakness and smallness as such must be due either to gross misunderstanding or to culpable superficiality. The real truth which Christianity has brought out is that what seems outwardly small and weak may quite well possess an inward greatness. It has

discovered greatness in that which is small, and thereby changed all the standards of life. And at the same time it has broken down all rigid barriers between small and great. No longer measuring man by man, *i.e.* the finite by the finite, as the ancients did, but using the infinity and perfection of divine life as the standard of measurement, it has made all differences sink into insignificance in face of the common experience of the insufficiency of all human achievement. Great though those differences might seem when measured by human standards, they shrank into narrow compass when placed over against infinity. It was only when all man's error and guilt failed to hinder the working of a divine life in the soul that a measureless love, — baseless according to human ideas, — could reach out to all human beings and become a mighty impelling force leading to an inner uplifting of life.

It is through convulsive upheavals and the sorrow and death of many noble men that life-forces such as these have forced their way upwards. And now come the shallow-minded apostles of negation, making a great outcry and declaring that the depths inaccessible to them are not there at all. They have no suspicion of the seriousness of the issue here at stake or of the grave loss and retrogression which the spread of negation involves. We cannot do without justice, but never can we be satisfied with mere justice.

That history can show many instances of softness and mildness being displayed in the wrong place may be willingly conceded, but this is no argument against the quality as such. We on our side are equally insistent that life should recognise justice and bring it into the right relationship with love, but in the exercise of justice

we never dare lose sight of the fact that all justice as administered by man yields but a partial and particular and indeed very problematic view of life, and that human life inevitably becomes stiff and soulless if it does not in last resort appeal from justice to love. Not only do general considerations prove this, but the needs of the present day demand it. For the modern mind is keenly alive to the incompleteness of human existence, the saturation of all our effort with great contradictions, the clashing of a desire for infinity with the limited character of our capacity. It is only by indulging in self-contradiction that it could accept the old closed system with its corresponding ideal of justice, and drive love from the guidance of human destinies. The modern humanitarian tendency, to which we owe so much, also points in this same direction of love. It can hardly avoid the dangers of sentimentalism, dissipation, and effeminacy if it loses touch with those depths of life which Christianity has opened up.

The problem of justice and love, however, is not a mere question of temper and feeling: it extends into the very substance of life and work. We saw that in all spiritual activity the objective fact acquired an independent status over against the opinions, moods, and aims of the subject. Here it has a right which it must maintain and insist upon resolutely. It dare not allow any abatement of it in favour of human weakness and caprice. It is only on such a soil that civilisation can grow and constitute itself a spiritual possession for mankind. To this extent justice is here also the presupposition of all success. It is through recognising the right of the objective world that man first finds an inward anchorage and some sure indication of how to direct his conduct.

But we saw how this separation and opposition of man and objective fact, this stage of justice, was overtaken and transcended by spiritual creation, and how the fact was thus absorbed into life which itself became wider in the process, — soul and fact interacting fruitfully with each other and each strengthening the other. Thus life was lifted to a level which we may call love, since on this level all sense of foreignness is banished, and inward unity and stability are acquired at the same time as freedom and joy. It is only at this height that it becomes possible to weed out all egoism and at the same time produce a positive temper of life, an affirmative attitude concerning it, since in truth a thorough conquest of egoism can never be brought about either through argument or resignation, but only through the creation of a new life. Thus the Christian ideal of love contains also a cultural ideal, even though it be indicated rather than realised; and the augmented life thus demanded is of an incomparably stronger and more fruitful type than that of Eastern Asiatic philosophy, — admirable though this be in its way, — with its reduction of life to quiet contemplation and absorption into eternal Being. Love then must be in the first instance creative and not merely passive.

But there has been a still stronger tendency of our time running counter not only to the specifically Christian way of conceiving morality but to the prominence of morality altogether, and even to awarding it any independent significance. Morality was regarded very largely as a mere means for securing ends foreign to itself, or else as a phenomenon attendant on another order of event. The former was the case when all cosmic concepts and the whole of life were under the

domination of nature, while what had hitherto been called morality was subservient merely to natural self-preservation; the latter alternative prevailed in the case of those beliefs and doctrines which changed all reality into a thought-process advancing steadily in accordance with an inward necessity, morality in this case being nothing more than the surrender of the individual to this all-authoritative process. In both cases alike there was no question of building up a world of moral personality; in both cases the mere unfolding of power took the place of personal deed. This joint attack is all the more dangerous for Christianity, inasmuch as Christian morality in its traditional form is certainly not devoid of weaknesses. It does not do sufficient justice to the natural element in our life, the wide extent of mechanism, the resistance to freedom generally. It fastens the burden of guilt too heavily on individual souls. Moreover, it is not sufficiently concerned with making the inner emotion outwardly effective and carrying the moral movement beyond the feeling and temper of the individual into the very substance of life. This again goes closely with the fact that morality is regarded too much as a separate department which does not touch other departments such as science and art, whereas in truth the moral problem runs all through life and holds up a high imperative standard to all departments alike. Thus it is a somewhat dangerous mistake to make the formation of a good character the direct goal of life and conduct, as this goal should be sought rather in the growth of a spiritual energy, a growth which does however involve the moral ascent as a primary condition. Throughout we must regard the traditional state of Christian morality

not as something finished and final, but as still in the making.

This, however, we are well entitled to do, since the fundamental truth of morality, as we see it emerging in Christianity and becoming a power in the world's history, is secure and independent of all strife as to the manner of realising it and of all the changes which time brings. It could be contested only when erroneous conceptions were substituted and the conditions of genuine morality were misjudged. Morality demands emancipation from the petty finite self. This seems a strange utopian dream, so long as our existence is a mere juxtaposition of conflicting elements; it is no utopia, however, when we recognise a life that is rooted in the whole and the possibility of transplanting man into that wider existence. Morality demands a power of independent choice, a basing of life on personal deed. This of course is absurd so long as we men are fragments of a single given and finite world. It becomes perfectly intelligible, however, so soon as we recognise that we are the meeting-ground of different world-levels which require us to choose between them, so that our life is full of great possibilities, challenges, and adventures, as we have already shown in greater detail. That morality counted its goal as superior to all others and its values as incomparably the most important is a piece of bold presumption so long as moral tasks seem to lie in the same plane as all others; but this contention proves itself fully justified and even inevitable when once the conviction strikes home that morality is concerned with raising the whole level of life.

Our conceptions of morality must be large enough: in particular we must continually bear in mind that we

are not dealing here with isolated resolves belonging to the passing moment, but with decisions which affect the whole trend and direction of life, decisions which penetrate and form our being, which have to be continually renewed and maintained against all debasing influences. In last resort the question resolves itself into this: Whether life is simply a process that takes place in us, or whether we can transmute it into our own deed. In the former case, despite all its apparent nearness it remains obscure and inwardly alien to us. It is only if the latter alternative be true that it can become in the full sense of the word our own life and thus receive an illumination from within. In the one case, soul and content are lacking, however busy and gay life may seem on the surface; in the other, they are most intimately one with it. Thus the fundamental idea of a spiritual immediacy in life, on which in last resort all spirituality hinges, can only be realised with the help of morality, and further it is only with the help of morality that life can be transfigured into freedom.

It is, therefore, a great thing that Christianity should so strenuously have pressed home upon the recognition of the world the supreme importance of morality. This it has done and still continues to do. More than any other religion it has lifted morality to a position of supreme power in the universe. It has made moral problems the very centre of the world's happenings; it has invested them with tremendous seriousness. If it has not actually disclosed ultimate depths of reality, it has at least given us some hint of them. It has moved heaven and earth in order to save a soul for man. To the lifework of each individual, however insignificant it may seem outwardly, it has given a meaning and value which reach

right into the infinite and the eternal. And just as Christianity, at its very outset, gave man by these means something great to work for and courage and strength for the task of life, so too the philosophical morality of modern times has drawn steadily upon this original source. In fact, had it not been quickened and warmed there, its idea of duty would have remained formal and powerless. As for the present moment, it stands in most urgent need of a strong moral force wherewith to meet its perplexities and problems, — that it may rise to the level of spiritual creativeness, vanquish base self-seeking, protect itself against the epicureanism which threatens it, and give life a spiritual independence. Can anything well be more perverse in a time so full of problems than to bend one's energies to lowering the status of morality and with it the great world-power of Christianity in which it is rooted?

5. The problem of our position with regard to Christianity reaches its highest pitch of interest when we ask ourselves what attitude we are to adopt towards the central doctrine of Christianity, viz. the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice for the redemption of man from the burden of God's wrath. We saw how the desire for one single, all-controlling, fundamental truth, — a desire deep-rooted in all well-defined religions, — found in this doctrine a magnificent fulfilment, how the union here effected of temporal and supra-temporal history, of human and divine nature, introduced unfathomable depths into human existence and invested them with a spiritual nearness and intimacy. And finally we saw how with relentless logic that central doctrine impelled the formation of a rigidly stereotyped world of ideas and made them part of the settled con-

viction of the faithful. But we have also convinced ourselves that the modern world has raised most emphatic protest against every single one of these points as well as against the whole general position. Not only has it cast most serious doubt upon the foundation of this fundamental truth; it has not even been satisfied with its content. The union of God and man in one person, the idea of a vicarious sacrifice and generally of the office of mediator, as well as all those doctrines which subserve the development of the main position, — doctrines of the only begotten Son, the virgin birth, the descent into hell, the resurrection, and the ascension, the sitting at the right hand of God, and the judgment to come; that is to say, the whole of the second clause of the creed, comprising the doctrines which are really distinctive of Christianity, — all this has now become the subject of doubt, denial, and conflict.

We strove to surmount the opposition by keeping our eyes steadily fixed upon the problem of life and the position of religion in the whole of man's mental economy. We found that human life as a whole involves a tremendous task, a task which cannot be solved without recourse to religion. Religion, as we saw, has not only, as being universal, to establish and deepen the whole range of spiritual work; it must also open up, in opposition to this, the new stage of a world-transcending spiritual freedom. From this point of view it was easy to ensure a ready understanding of the problems of historical Christianity and full appreciation of the deep basic emotions which penetrate and inspire it, but so far are we from effecting an adjustment with its dogmatic teaching that our antagonism to it is rather increased. For hitherto the objections urged against it came rather

from the general organised body of spiritual life; but now they originate in the sphere of religion itself and are couched in this form: that, in Christian dogmatic teaching, necessary and fundamental truths, on which our whole life depends, are wedded to a specific mode of conceiving them, which we can no longer tolerate, that consequently a frightful discord is engendered in our soul, and that through this union of necessary truths with problematic, the former suffer serious injury, if not in themselves, yet certainly in their effect upon man. The convictions we have already expressed make it sufficiently clear that we can no longer limit the connexion between the human nature and the divine to one single instance, allowing it to extend to others only through this intermediate link. Our religious conviction compels us to demand an immediate relationship of divine and human through the whole extent of the spiritual life. Nor can we make the divine love and grace depend on the one manifestation of it in Jesus Christ. The imaginative conceptions, moreover, which support the whole edifice of Christian dogma, — particularly that of the wrath of God only to be appeased through the blood of His son, — we are bound to reject as far too anthropomorphic and irreconcilable with our purer conceptions of the Godhead. And we are the more bound to reject them in proportion as we find that they involve a problem as necessary as it is difficult: the problem, namely, of the relationship of justice and love, moral zeal and pardoning tenderness, both in the cosmic scheme and in human life. But the more important we consider this problem to be, the more impossible does it become to hold to a solution which is inwardly foreign to us and has even become offensive. We are

constrained even on religious grounds to press on towards a resolute expulsion of all doctrines which confuse human and divine in the picture of the personality of Jesus. Nor is our resistance on this point confined to the old, in itself consistent, doctrine of the God-man; it is directed also against the modern halfway position which drops the old doctrine, but nevertheless calls Jesus unconditionally lord and master and must consequently bind our whole religious life indissolubly to him, thus taking away all independence with regard to him, and robbing our own life of its full originative power. Nor is it individuals only who suffer from this conception; the whole of Christianity is affected by it. For Christianity now seems to be completely bound down to this one point, and to be incapable of anything more than holding fast to the truth as it was realised in Jesus. As a result of becoming thus stereotyped and limited it cannot possibly penetrate the whole fabric of history, renew its youth ever and again, enter into the life of the different periods and ennoble them each along its own special line. It does not become a continuous work in which we all have a share, as it must be if it is to serve as a real stimulus. Moreover, any change effected by historical criticism in our conception of Jesus will be certain to act detrimentally upon Christianity in general. These points amply prove that the opposition to the traditional conception of Christianity does not originate only from without, but may spring up in the bosom of religion itself. Opposition of this latter kind is particularly dangerous, for it makes what would otherwise be a mere intellectual statement into a sacred duty, an ethical demand.

But the more we admit all this and the more resolutely

we oppose all weak attempts at compromise, the more pressing does the question become whether our own conviction does not lack concreteness and is not dependent on the fluctuations of opinion and inclination. And with this comes the further question whether, with the abandonment of concrete historical fact as fixed by dogma, we do not lose all touch with the essence of Christianity.

Both questions point back to the problem of what we are to understand by fact in the domain of the spiritual life and especially in that of religion. Facts here cannot be occurrences which come to us from without, but all genuine fact must pertain to the inward life, and even what transpires in the inward life does not yield full assurance in its character as a single experience, since all single experiences are capable of being placed in different contexts and therewith interpreted differently. The assurance belongs only to movements and events as wholes, as totalities which support all single experiences and do not admit of being interpreted from without, but supply their own sufficient explanation.

That such movements are present in us as totalities and appoint us the task of advancing from whole to whole was the main result which we obtained from our survey of human life. Indeed, all sets of facts concentrated themselves, we found, into the one main and fundamental fact of an inner life becoming independent, the appearance of a new stage of reality in our midst. This fact as a totality showed, however, that it contained and implied a wider movement, a further ascent, which towers far above all that individual opinion and interpretation may be capable of. This fundamental fact of the spiritual life proved itself to be a historic world-

power, originator of all that lifts man essentially above the level of the mere beast, and building up, in the form of the spiritual culture, a great connected scheme of life. But it also made its presence directly felt in the soul of each individual, for everybody was confronted with the task of winning a spiritual self, grasping and developing the spiritual life just where he happened to be, becoming a spiritual force. That what constitutes the heart of the cosmic process can thus at the same time be the immediate experience of each individual and a task which compels fulfilment, gives our root-conviction both certainty and spiritual nearness; it sets life on a firm basis and secures it against all doubt. Everything that tradition and environment bring to us must be related to this spiritual fact; by this must it be illumined and vitalised. This alone supplies the standard which enables us to measure how much of the old material has a permanent value for life, and how much of it is bound up with the conditions of a particular age and must perish with them. From such a measurement even the complex structure of traditional Christianity cannot escape; only from this starting-point can its truth-content be clearly elucidated so that it may develop freely and become fully effective.

If we are once thus convinced that the facts which are decisive for religion are not merely adjacent to life but inherent in it, that they do not come to the soul from without but rise out of it, won by the self through concrete action, then in this shifting of concrete actuality from the seen to the unseen world we are liable to the reproach of allowing all that is solid and substantial to evaporate away. But this reproach we fling back again and appeal to all history as witness. For the course of

history has seen life's centre of gravity shifted ever more and more from the outer to the inner, from the seen to the unseen, — has been tending more and more to put thought-values before the things that can be grasped by the senses, thus setting the sense-world itself in a new light. In this movement religion plays a particularly energetic part. Every step of real religious advance was marked by a further subdual of the sensible to the non-sensible world. This was the line pursued by Christianity itself and followed up in its later history. To the laggard who remained at an earlier stage the newer development was bound to appear as destructive and dissolvent in character, just as early Christianity was often charged with atheism, and even to-day many Catholics are unwilling to allow that the less tangible religion of the Protestants is a religion at all. But it is always the progressives and not the laggards who set the standard. Thus it is quite in accordance with the whole trend of historical development when we demand a further advance from seen to unseen and wish to have true reality still more sharply distinguished from what is palpable to the senses.

But it is another question whether this further advance is in keeping with Christianity as presented to us, or whether we are not breaking with it completely. Doubtless we should be doing so were it not for the fact that even historical Christianity is much more than its dogmatic setting. That setting was in truth only an embodiment, indispensable, it is true, but never constituting the whole of life, and justifiable only as being an expression of the soul. Christianity existed before that particular embodiment took shape and has at all times unfolded a life which transcended it and was independent

of it. For the soul of Christianity was always something more simple and immediate: it was the immediate relationship of the soul to God with all the upheavals and upliftings which arose out of estrangement and reunion. If in its outward embodiment Christianity was ever inclining to greater elaboration and complexity, immediate Christian experience was equally desirous of a radical simplification, an unaffected humanity and a closeness of inward communion. This was always the case when the religious life showed any fresh manifestation of rejuvenating power, even when this happened within the Catholic Church, as in the case of Francis of Assisi and Thomas à Kempis. It was true, moreover, in all mysticism, in so far as this relates not to Christ but directly to God. And it holds good on all high levels of religious life: in religion also the simple thing is that which is great and truly needful. If we consider the confessions of a man like Augustine or read Pascal's thoughts on religion, what is it all about if not the immediate relationship of the soul to God and the preservation of the soul amid violent opposition? "God and the soul would I fain know. — Nothing more? — Nothing more," so thinks Augustine. It is therefore no disloyalty to Christianity, the religion of the spirit, if we count the events that happen within the spiritual life as supreme in importance and treat them accordingly.

But this does not mean that we fail to recognise the need of a considerable development in the situation as handed down to us. In earlier times, the inward events of life submitted uncritically to the presence of the outward embodiment alongside of them, and never came into collision with it, often indeed finding in it a very

desirable supplement. To-day, however, we have arrived at the consciousness of a contradiction between the soul and its embodiment, and this not as the result of a passing mood, but as part of the total development of our time. We are now concerned with the alternative whether the body shall enchain the soul or the soul transform the body. Even if the soul is victorious, it will have to seek a fresh embodiment, but in doing so it will be guided not by the tradition of past ages, but by the actual needs of our present stage of development. The soul-element will be able to assert its claim all the more successfully in proportion as life becomes more closely concentrated into a whole and superior to the individuals who compose it. And it does become thus superior according to the conception of spiritual life here presented.

It would be far outstepping the limits of our present enquiry if we were to view the separate doctrines of dogmatic Christianity from this standpoint and distinguish their permanent truth-content from their perishable setting. Here we may simply note in brief that even on our view the personality of Jesus, the man Jesus, is in no wise robbed of its pre-eminent significance, nor is his status lowered to that of a mere teacher of wisdom. All spiritual creation, — all creation that ennobles and renews, — is the work of some few individuals, as compared with whom the rest are mere assistants or even a mere ring of spectators. The creation in question was possible only because the personality itself was seeking in it its own primal nature, struggling, in its work, for a spiritual self-preservation, and carrying the struggle victoriously through. We saw how, in such upward wrestling, creative personalities

felt that they were not resting on their own strength, but were impelled by divine power, and how they interpreted all the result of their efforts as a revelation of that power. If greatness be so rare, and the consciousness of dependence in greatness so well-marked in the separate departments of spiritual work, the same thing holds still more truly where, as in religion, the character of the whole life is in question. The appearance of the new here seems more completely spontaneous; it proclaims a still sharper break with the old, a dropping of old connexions, the existence of an independent life-source. At the same time, the consciousness of dependence on a higher power now rises to the height of a soul-communion with God. As change and miracle are here so much greater, creative personalities are proportionately fewer. The whole of the world's history revolves round some few of these. Why Jesus occupies among them a unique position and a particularly high place we do not here need to discuss.

We should like, however, to call attention to the fact that it is precisely our conviction of what is essential and valuable in a creative personality which makes us more capable of withstanding the doubts raised by historical criticism than are those to whom the dogmatic position of Jesus is the one all-important matter. For it can scarcely be disputed that the way in which the position is conceived does not really reproduce the conviction of Jesus himself, but is due rather to the reverence of the ages which succeeded him. On the other hand, the thoroughly unique mould of life which we find in Jesus could not possibly have been a later fabrication or a cunning piece of patchwork. Here we are offered a substantial fact which admits of no doubt.

But, it may be asked, is there not in every well-defined individuality an inward limitation? Can any individuality, marked with its own particular quality, retain its influence always and for ever? Certainly not, in the sense of imposing its particular quality upon everyone. Where the "Imitation of Christ" has been understood in this sense, it has given rise to much error and confusion. But, *qua* spiritual, such a creative personality is more than accidental and particular. It contains an element of permanence and eternal youth in so far as it lifts the problem to a height hitherto undreamt of, transplants us into a new world, and, through the full surrender of its nature to one all-controlling task, exercises an irresistible power of stimulus and inspiration. The realisation of this can become to us also a mighty impelling force and a fountain of new life. We can mould, enrich, and uplift ourselves thereby without ever losing the originality of our own life and impairing our own distinctive character. For here there is no question of accepting slavishly whatever comes to us, or bending beneath an alien yoke, but rather of arousing and winning our most intimate spiritual nature at the same time that we gain access to a world which knows no change of time and no hostile schism of individuals.

6. We have touched repeatedly on the problem of the Church and convinced ourselves that, in spite of all defects and imperfections, a religious community is nevertheless indispensable. Christianity, moreover, must find such a community particularly essential and valuable, since, with more than ordinary boldness, it builds up a new world over against the world as given, and instead of looking upon the kindgom of God as

a far-distant goal seeks to bring it right into human existence. The greatness of the design was, as usually happens, on a par with the greatness of the complications and dangers involved. There arose an incessant struggle not only with outside foes, but in the bosom of Christianity itself; and the conflict over the relationship between Church and personality elicited, in the Reformation, the greatest cleavage known to the history of Christendom.

But since we are looking forwards, not backwards, we have to deal here with those questions only which are thrust upon us by the present state of affairs and its estrangement of religion and culture. Under the influence of this estrangement, church life to-day is dividing up into two opposing movements. On the one hand, there is the endeavour to keep culture under the sway of religion, to allow only such parts of it as conform to the ecclesiastical thought-world and to reject as decadent and erroneous everything which goes along other lines. But if great changes are really involved in the progress of the centuries, — and we satisfied ourselves that such was the case, — then a procedure of this kind must act harshly and oppressively and bring about a spiritual stagnation. The encyclicals against modernists and the anti-modernist oath show very clearly whither this path is leading. On the other hand, there is an effort on the part of many Protestants to escape complications by separating religion as far as possible from culture, and assigning it an independent sphere. But religion is thus apt to become a mere subjective emotional excitement, whose highly strung sentiment cannot conceal its lack of spiritual substance, while it possesses no motive which would lead it to form a community. In

this way, religion is indeed out of danger and secure from any conflict with culture, but at the same time it cannot bring us anything essentially new; it loses its power of enlisting recruits and is necessarily liable to the greatest danger which can befall religion, — the danger of being regarded with indifference. Thus the modern attitude toward the Church fluctuates between a bitter resentment of its oppressiveness and a complete indifference. Small wonder is it that the average person tends on the whole to fight shy of it.

But impossible though it is either to explain away or to minimise the fact of a widespread antipathy to the Church, yet it is open to question whether this feeling is more than surface deep. Does it really reach down to life's depths, or is there not rather an intense longing growing up there for a religious community, though it be one that may arise in opposition to the existing churches? We saw that in proportion as modern life develops its distinctive character, its limitations become more strongly emphasised and therewith its need for some completing factor, a need which seems to call imperatively for a union of men under the banner of religion. The more powerful the attraction of the external world and the more compelling its hold upon us, the greater becomes our longing for a strengthening of the inner life by a union of kindred souls in some sort of outward organisation. When the hurry of work keeps life in bondage to the moment and makes us forget the present in our anxiety about the future, it becomes all the more necessary to secure some position of permanence and a present which transcends time. This, however, requires that we should found an order which stands for the abiding truth in our common life as op-

posed to the changes of time. When we consider further how the natural struggle for existence becomes intensified in social intercourse till it assumes the form of implacable competition, how modern life leaves man ever lonelier despite the expanding wealth of his outer relations, and how the pursuit of power and enjoyment together with a calculating utilitarianism suppress all care for inward riches and their intrinsic value, — when we consider, moreover, how our inner life suffers from all this, then it becomes very easily intelligible that deeper souls should be seized with a desire for the formation of a society which treats the problems of the inward life as an end in themselves and withstands the attempt to regard them as external; in this, however, not opposing the phase now reached in the historical development of the spiritual life but rather acting harmoniously with it. In the development of such a society there is no need for religion and culture to become estranged or divided, provided only that a common spiritual life embrace them both, and that in regard to both we make clearer distinctions, — distinguishing more clearly, in the case of religion, between spiritual substance and the form in which man may appropriate it, and, in the case of culture, between spiritual culture and humanistic culture. Let us here give a few indications as to how the religious community may recognise both religion and culture and endeavour to effect an understanding between them, itself winning great significance in the process.

Religion must not become in the community a means to other ends, such as political power or social well-being; for this might easily mean a loss of its most essential qualities, namely, inwardness and superiority

to the world. But to recognise religion as an end in itself does not mean separating it from life and making it into a doctrine of the other world. He who understands it from the point of view of life as a whole will rather seek its task here and now, will above all expect it to strengthen, ennoble, and uplift human existence. This, however, it cannot do unless it enter courageously into the life of the age and concern itself seriously with its needs and sorrows. It is not that we must abandon ourselves to the things of this world, but rather reach a loftier point of view whence we may discover more in it, make it more progressive, see it and deal with it in the light of larger contexts. "Among men must we seek God." All present-day problems which concern man as a whole must stir the religious community also to activity. Not to abandon the heights, but to bring them into closer connexion with the broad level of life, — that is our task! Not to appraise the world too highly, but to lift its inward level and keep alive in it the sense of a transcendent life. Not to be the slaves of our time, but to interest ourselves more in its concerns and seek an Eternal within it!

Our time, indeed, is quite unique in character and is rich in unfathomable problems. Is it not strange, for instance, that young theologians should still be trained mainly along philological and historical lines just as the Reformation required of them, in necessary accordance with its conviction of the value of the Bible? All honour to the Bible, but is it right that the study of Hebrew, for example, should rank as more necessary than a thorough introduction to the social problems of the age? Is that phrase of Luther's, which was so striking and forceful in his day still applicable to ours, —

that languages (*i.e.* foreign languages) are the sheath in which the sword of the spirit is encased? If the Church does not seek to come into close touch with the age, it need not be surprised if the age become indifferent to it.

Just as we must seek to make our actions penetrate the world, so we must try also to bring our convictions into closer connexion with the life-process. The religious community undoubtedly needs a thought-world of its own, sprung from religious soil. If it were to rivet this world indissolubly to the results attained in other departments, then it could not oppose any firm resistance to the movements of the day, and would easily be drawn now hither, now thither, by the surface currents of the age. A religious community which shirks all contradiction and never essays any vigorous criticism of its environment or initiates any aggressive policy in regard to it has forfeited the right to an independent existence.

On the other hand, we must weigh against this the fact that the witness of history and our own previous exposition both show us that religion, through opposition to its environment, may fall into grievous embarrassment. The only way of meeting this difficulty is for the religious community to take its stand upon truths which belong directly to the life-process itself and do not arise in the first instance from metaphysical speculation or historical tradition, — truths, that is, which concern and maintain the facts of the appearance of a new world among men and the development of this world through conflict and upheaval, the facts of a basic, struggling, and triumphant spirituality. It is for the Church to uphold these central truths and bring them into the con-

flict, courageous and confident of victory, sustained by the conviction that no peripheral event can shake the centre and that the actual development of a reality remains securely independent of all views as to its precise nature. Only truths of this kind can grow so intimately one with man's nature that their defence becomes to him a matter of spiritual self-preservation and therewith a matter of the utmost possible certainty. It is only in regard to such facts that the common experience of the whole human race in the upbuilding of the spiritual life can become at the same time an immediate experience and task for each individual. Moreover, these life-truths, while immutable as regards their fundamental content, yet allow of change in the mode of their formulation, and can thus enter into closer touch with the movement of the times. For when the superiority of the fundamental process to every mode of manifesting and presenting it is fully recognised, then the truth can be at one and the same time an adamantine fact and a task which must ever be approached anew. It is then possible to possess and yet to seek. The possession indeed requires the search, since the depth stirring within us is thus transformed into an ever fuller self-activity. The movement of the times may thus serve to give the time-transcending truth an ever more complete expression. All human conception of the divine truth is, in last resort, a symbol, and what really concerns us is that this symbol should be the fittest possible and that there should be no noticeable discrepancy between it and the truth it subserves. For once such discrepancy arises, life loses its coherence and the religious thought-world its certainty and convincingness. This mode of transcending oppositions, however, can be utilised

only when fundamental life-truths and not traditional dogmas constitute the heart and essence of the world of thought.

In last resort everything depends upon the question whether the religious community does really possess one and only one all-embracing truth which is indispensable to man's existence. The fact which is more than all else responsible for the shattering of ecclesiastical religion is that the truth which it once championed as fundamental, — that, namely, of the incarnation and the mediatorial office of Christ, — is no longer tenable in the present phase of our intellectual development, and that whatever new truth is struggling into the light has not yet acquired the wholeness and fixity belonging to a fact which transcends all subjective opinion. These qualities it must have as the main condition and requirement for a strengthening and rejuvenation of the religious community. They are, moreover, something which can quite easily be acquired, since one great all-embracing fact is really present in our life summoning us to incessant work. This fact is, as we saw, the appearance of a new stage of reality, the opening-up of a life which draws from the universe as a whole. In making it our own, we are at the same time combining to build up among us a kingdom of the spirit. And if it be true that this task can be discharged only at the cost of opposition to the average level of human conditions and through the realisation of remoter depths, — if, therefore, it cannot really succeed without recourse to religion, — then the religious community does possess one supreme aim and at the same time a permanent value. However true it be, then, that the condition of our time requires us in the first instance to become in-

dependent as regards the past, yet the more assured this independence becomes, the more possible is it to seek some understanding with the past and the more possible also for the contributions of different periods to become welded together into one common work.

Summary

Point by point it has been shown that the maintenance of Christianity requires considerable changes in its traditional form. Religion must enter into closer touch with human activity and at the same time become a more powerful leaven in the world. The spiritual life must be more independent of man's character and condition, and must overcome within itself the opposition between personal and impersonal modes of conceiving it, which it can do only by advancing to an essentially higher level. In the idea of redemption the positive and renewing aspect must play a more important part. Christian morality must form the high level along which further progress is to be made. The central fact of religion must be shifted further back; it must now be the upbuilding of a new life for man and for mankind, and must thus become more intimately related to the soul. Finally the Church must become a repository of the facts and tasks of life itself. Nor are these various demands unconnected, existing merely side by side. They are only different aspects of one requirement which runs through them all and they all point in the same direction, namely, this: that Christianity must work out the life it contains into a more independent form, and outline its world from the vantage-point thus gained. The important matter is the development of a Christianity more deeply rooted in the life-process itself and revealing

itself in this process, a Christianity more original and more universal, more active and more manly. Such a Christianity does not come to us as an already completed work; it is a movement still in progress, a movement which calls for our personal co-operation and even makes us part-supporters of a new life. In the Christianity of the first centuries, concerned as it was with the introduction of a new world in opposition to one already in possession, the idea that each individual in his own station must carry on the common work by the exercise of his own activity possessed great hold over men and was a powerful spur to action. Origen expressed this thought by saying that the true follower of Christ must not merely believe in Christ but be himself a Christ, and serve the salvation of his brethren by his life and suffering. To-day again Christianity is absorbed in a great and perhaps still harder struggle. Again to-day it can only conquer on condition that it be treated as a continuous work in which all have a share; its disciples must not merely accept it, but themselves help in its upbuilding. Our political experience teaches us that the interest in political life can be warm and vigorous only when the individual citizens take an active part in the whole régime and feel inwardly responsible for it. When they merely obey commands issued by a superior, they cannot feel any genuine interest. Similarly it is true for religion that we put forth our whole power of love and work only when we treat the matter as a concern of our own and, in championing it, are at the same time asserting ourseives. But how could religion as a whole become a matter of our own activity in any other way than that we have described, — by being shifted, that is to say, to life's inmost centre and

being understood as a demand for spiritual self-preservation, self-preservation both of the individual and of the race?

Increase of activity involves also a growth in certainty. For nothing can be more certain to us, nothing stand less in need of proof or outside support, than that which sets its impress upon our own life and first shapes it as spiritual life. The more firmly we become established in this life and thereby participate in a reality which may well serve as the kernel of all reality, the less easily are we frightened by the obscurity, nay more, by the hostility of our environment, and the more confidently shall we maintain the fundamental truth against all contradictions. In surveying all that is promised us through the closer union of religion with the fundamental fact of the spiritual life, we need have no concern lest such a union should inflict any damage on religion.

We may, however, feel some concern, — this we readily admit, — as to whether the new goal which we are seeking does not lie outside the radius of Christianity rather than within it. The answer to this question depends on what we are to understand by belonging to a religion, and this again on what we are to consider as the core and essence of a religion. If religion means a closed system of doctrines and institutions, then he alone may count as an adherent who accepts this system in its fullest extent. This view, however, we have opposed through the whole course of our enquiry. If religion has to do first and foremost with life, then its essential and distinguishing function is the characteristic shaping it gives to life and the question resolves itself into this, — whether we also shape life in this way, identify our-

selves with the life-movement thus initiated and carry it on still further along similar lines, or the contrary.

Now it has become thoroughly clear to us that Christianity deals with the widest possible range of the problems inherent in our human nature as a whole and sounds their utmost depths, — that, therefore, together with a very well-marked individuality, it may at the same time claim to possess a universal character, not as something that it has already attained, but as something that it is progressively seeking to realise. To attach oneself to such a movement is not at all the same thing as accepting without further ado a ready-made position; it means rather that we identify ourselves with the creative working of the whole movement and further it to the best of our ability. Such a movement, moreover, is a fact of the most significant kind. A very characteristic type of life has here taken shape and penetrates the whole history of the world with its transforming leaven. To appreciate this properly we should bear in mind that the number of possibilities which our life contains when viewed from the inside is strictly limited; they can be reviewed quite easily. We should select that possibility which best includes and develops life in all its breadth and depth. This, however, is what we maintain of the Christian type of life. Historical Christianity, therefore, rests upon an eternal Christianity, but is immensely important from the fact that it made the eternal Christianity appear for the first time upon the plane of history and become a power in the world. Therewith the previously detached fragments of truth became for the first time welded into a whole and operative as a whole. A struggle with resistant elements was undertaken all along the line and

a historical embodiment came into being which, with all its imperfections, yet aimed at the highest and has brought us to the point where we stand to-day. To sever ourselves from this great movement of the ages and to ignore the deepest experiences of mankind would be a falling into the void, an abandonment of life to shallow subjectivity.

Moreover, the investigation we have made shows clearly that there is nothing in the new requirements of to-day which breaks with the fundamental truth of Christianity; this latter is only carried on further in accordance with the stage of historical development which we have now reached. We saw the necessity of maintaining a religion which both transcends and penetrates the world, in order to make spiritual creation at all possible and to oppose to the hurry of progress a life in spiritual possession of itself. We saw that the supremacy of the spiritual life which Christianity supports with so much emphasis can and must maintain itself even on modern ground. We saw that the spiritual activity of man can never depend upon the capacity of the isolated individual, but that obstacles without and divisions within can be overcome only through the living presence of a life which draws from the whole, a life which does not merely raise what is given to a higher power, but transforms its very essence. We convinced ourselves of the permanent significance of the distinctively Christian morality; we convinced ourselves also that the moral idea could rightfully claim to direct the whole life. The concrete fact which gave stability and orientation to life had to be shifted further back, but a central concrete actuality of a spiritual kind was found to be absolutely indispensable, and with it was disclosed also the pos-

sibility of retaining, within religion, the permanent significance of the individual personality. Lastly, the formation of an independent community under the banner of religion was shown to be indispensable. Thus the change which the conditions of the age call for does not touch the fundamental fact and the essential truth: it falls within them. The truth itself is not shaken because in its development among us men it has to pass through different phases. In the light of such reflexions we believe ourselves justified in returning a confident Yes to the question: Can we still be Christians?

A confirmation of the statement that Christianity, in its very uniqueness, possesses not only a just claim but also a supremacy and an abiding truth, can be easily furnished by a comparison of its particular character with that of other religions and also with such a religious movement as opposes Christianity to-day from the side of culture.

Of the other religions we note in particular Judaism and the Indian religions. Judaism is great through the resoluteness and purity of its morals. It reverences the freedom of man; it summons him to a life of busy activity and induces in him a vigorous confident temper. Through a long series of troublous times it has kept up a joyful and courageous attitude towards life and engendered, in particular, a capacity for social self-sacrifice such as can hardly be paralleled. But, despite all these services, it has an inner limitation. It does not, like a religion of redemption, effect a revolution and renewal of man's life. Therefore, it never reaches a new standpoint, and cannot adequately sound the depths of sorrow, darkness, and sin. It cannot escape being unduly optimistic and there is a certain sobriety which

it never transcends. Soul-warmth it attains only in so far as it remains the conviction of a somewhat small, exclusive, self-centred circle. Once it leaves this, it is prone to become abstract and rationalistic. Since the appearance of Christianity it has been left stranded in the course of the world's advance, although Christianity contains many more unsolved problems and is far more prone to come into collision with culture.

The Indian religions point in an absolutely opposite direction. They have achieved the great revolution of world and life with wonderful impressiveness and made it an immediate experience of the soul. Since all man's care and effort are here expended on the problem of turning from the world of appearance and becoming to the eternal unity, life becomes magnificently simple, and a mood of exalted tenderness penetrates the whole sphere of being. But there is no return, as there is in Christianity, from the negative to the positive position, from the denial of the world to the giving it a real value. Life, conceived impersonally, finds no road to any satisfying activity. It remains to too great an extent mere contemplation. Overshadowed by speculative metaphysic, ethics never obtains her due.

Christianity also effects a revolution of the world and, to this extent, involves a metaphysic. But this metaphysic springs from life and especially from its ethical experience. It is therefore of a far more vigorous type, and can come back from its speculation to exercise an uplifting influence upon the world and effect there a radical renewal. Thus Christianity has a capacity for assimilating the problems of other religions and working for their solution. It is true that in virtue of its greater breadth it runs the risk of becoming less simple

and less intelligible to the individual, but we saw that there was in the bosom of Christianity itself the wherewithal to counteract such a danger. And this is just what our own time demands.

In conclusion, we must note very briefly the great superiority of the Christian type of life and the Christian movement to all that vague religiosity which is in process of developing to-day and which thinks, in its self-satisfied conceit, that it can look down on Christianity. It is true that this religiosity is justified in so far as it demands an immediacy of religious experience in opposition to all dependence on the mere past. But if from the starting-point of such an immediacy we are to win a content for religion, then the subjectivity of the mere individual must be lifted into an independent spiritual life which rises above the fortuitousness of individuals. It is from the standpoint of such a spiritual life that great experiences are alone possible and that a friendly relation to history can also be effected. But if the subject be left to its own resources, then it can never get further than a transient fluctuation of empty feelings. There is no possibility of welding individuals together, since their unlimited subjectivity drives them in different directions. And how from such fleeting figures can we expect any vigorous resistance to the immensity of darkness and hostility which threatens our life? How attain a stable position which will withstand the shifting surface currents of the age? This life of religiosity would not even wear the colouring of religion if it did not borrow from the very Christianity which it cannot sufficiently disparage. Thus vague religiosity must be regarded not as a promising beginning, but only as a symptom of a religious crisis. This crisis, however,

cannot be weathered by an abandonment of Christianity, but only by an extension of it, — not by an abrupt rejection of all the work of history, but only by referring this work to that within it which is true and eternal.

II. The Impossibility of a Reform within the Existing Churches

That Christianity is more than its ecclesiastical forms is a conviction that lay at the root of our whole enquiry. It was this conviction alone which authorised us to strive for an understanding between Christianity and the present stage of development in spiritual life. Thus our decision in favour of Christianity does not prejudice our verdict as regards the particular churches. We have first of all to enquire whether these are capable of taking up the movement which has been maturing through the history of the ages and therewith developing Christianity beyond the point reached by the Church to-day. We must limit ourselves in this enquiry to the churches with which we Germans and western Europeans generally are mainly concerned, viz. Catholicism and Protestantism. And we must consider them not in their constitution as a whole, but only in their attitude to the problem of a development of Christianity.

(*a*) *Catholicism*

That Catholicism declines to further this development and cannot do otherwise if it is to be loyal to its own fundamental idea, is a fact which cannot be disputed. It has stereotyped as final the form which Christianity reached in the zenith of the Middle Ages, and it can therefore admit of forward development in surface matters only

and not in its fundamental content. If forward developments have really been effected in this latter, as our investigation seemed to show, then Catholicism is in a very difficult position. It is true that this stereotyping of an unchangeable content in both life and belief possesses peculiar advantages. It produces a strong feeling of rest and security which counts for much amid life's doubts and troubles. Moreover, the common human experiences implied in it are a safeguard against dependence on the changing currents of mere surface movements. But at the same time we must not be blind to the grave dangers of such a stereotyping process. There is in the first place the danger that life will become less original if once more repetition takes the place of independent production. If on the other hand it be urged that there are great advantages in historical continuity, we must remember that true continuity does not mean a uniform persistence, but a persistence of the same spirit through a variety of shapes. In Catholicism, however, there is no room for such variety. The fixing of the form, moreover, becomes a hindrance to life when once the progress of the centuries has brought forth such far-reaching changes as those which have actually taken place. For then the form must exercise an ever harsher pressure upon those who cling to it, and must have recourse to a mode of proof which becomes more and more artificial the farther man travels from the starting-point of mediæval organisation. As a matter of fact, Catholicism has constantly narrowed its boundaries as compared with mediæval conditions under which many forms could still exist side by side. This happened first through its opposition to the Reformation and subsequently through its opposition

to culture. It is therefore increasingly unable to embrace the whole spiritual movement of mankind. It becomes more and more just one particular sect, and, despite all outward achievements, yet loses the true catholicity.

In addition to these dangers common to all stereotyping of forms, there are complications arising out of the particular way in which mediævalism accomplished the process. Two points in particular are characteristic of its method. In the first place it effected a comprehensive synthesis of life, an adjustment of life's varied interests under the leadership of religion. This is a very great, and in its way unique achievement. An irresistible longing of the human spirit for unity of life is here recognised and satisfied in a manner suitable to the conditions of that age. There is in this a universality which gives lasting greatness to Catholicism and enables it to extend its influence over all departments of life. Yet the mediæval way of solving the problem is bound to prove unsatisfactory in the long run. The individual elements in its synthesis were for the most part already fully formed before they entered into the combination. There was Christianity in the shape which it had assumed at the closing epoch of antiquity; there was the Greek element represented in particular by the Aristotelian philosophy; there was the Roman organisation. All these were combined not so as to form an inner unity and mutually permeate each other within an inclusive whole; they were merely adjusted skilfully by help of the idea of gradation. This method may blunt the edge of contradictions, or even push them altogether out of sight, but at bottom it is never really more than a compilation. Modern thought, on the other hand, is so

strong in its desire for independence and original experience that it insists upon an inner unity of life, and this must be insisted on especially by all those who would fain bring Christianity into closer touch with that stage of historical development which the spiritual life has now reached.

There is a second important point. It was quite in accordance with the slack and jaded mood which characterised the close of antiquity to rivet the spiritual life to a sensible embodiment and only accord it a full reality when it was made obvious to the senses. This has the advantage of making things very vivid and forcible, and it favours a close union of religion with art. But it tended also to make the invisible kingdom of God more and more secondary to the visible Church. Man, despairing of his own powers, came to rest his convictions not upon the emotions and experiences of his own soul, but entirely upon the authority of the Church, so that finally he believed not so much in God and in the Christian truth as in the Catholic Church. This attitude of mind is already apparent in Augustine when he writes: "I would not believe the Gospel, if the authority of the Catholic Church did not induce me thereto." In the Middle Ages, among spiritually immature nations, this tendency grew more and more marked, till at length the Church became the sole repository of truth and the moral conscience of mankind. This, however, necessarily implies the enfeeblement of the independent life of personality, for such a life must wrestle with ultimate problems for itself. Thus the greatness of the Church makes the individual of small account. With all its busy industry and readiness for sacrifice, it does not produce a Christianity of manly freedom, strong and upright.

With this too is associated the further danger that the Church may pose as an ultimate end in itself, and therewith make the maintenance of its own position and the spreading of its power take precedence of all other tasks, — a procedure which will necessarily involve it in worldly affairs to the serious damage of its spirituality. Life is thus threatened with a too abundant growth of ecclesiasticism at the expense of concern for the soul, with an overvaluation of services done to the Church as opposed to spiritual changes wrought in man.

If all this results in an implacable antagonism to that strengthening of the inner life which our modern age has effected, or must at any rate desire to effect, we must also remember that the riveting of the spiritual life to a sensory element, which is characteristic of the older thought, is utterly incompatible with the newer and freer conceptions. In particular, the riveting of religious influences to outward occurrences, as exemplified in the old view of the sacraments, seems to our modern temper to be a kind of magic and, therefore, not to be tolerated. What an impassable gulf we are conscious of between the old world and the new, when episcopal decrees still speak of "demons" and the denial of them is regarded as an effluence of infidelity! In the light of these considerations the conclusion becomes inevitable that it is impossible, within Catholicism, to effect a radical renewal of Christianity and adjust it to that stage which the spiritual life has now reached in the course of its historical development. With Catholicism the last word is "stability," and the eternal truth is ever in bondage to a temporal power.

(*b*) *Protestantism*

In Protestantism the chances of an adjustment seem much more favourable. For since its own birth involved a breach with tradition it cannot possibly disallow the right of progress. Its history, moreover, shows very diverse phases and a close connexion with culture as a whole. Why, then, should it not be possible for it to come to terms with things as they are to-day?

But the matter is not so simple as it seems when thus presented. In the first place, the old Protestantism did not regard itself as in any way a mere part of a progressing movement, but rather as a highly necessary restoration of a truth which had been tarnished and disfigured but was in itself valid to all eternity. To this extent it shows just as decided an aversion to the idea of progress as did Catholicism. It is only on viewing its fundamental position more closely that we see a greater possibility of movement involved in it. It was a great and invaluable service to have saved Christianity from being swamped by ecclesiasticism and to have recalled it in such emphatic terms to its main task, — the formation of a moral and personal life. For the pursuit of this task, Protestantism regarded it as indispensable to bring out the unique character of Christianity with the utmost clearness, to free it from all alien accretion and in general to make religion, so far as possible, self-dependent. Busied with these aims, it allowed concern for culture to fall into the background. This indeed, in comparison with the supreme task, seemed a more or less indifferent matter which could be left to itself. Culture therefore became freer, and it is quite intelligible that, when once the Reformation movement had lost its initial

force, culture should exercise in turn a strong influence on the religious life, and in doing so should not be conscious at the outset of contradicting in any way the fundamental character of the Reformation. As a matter of fact, the newer Protestantism, as developed first by the Enlightenment and subsequently by the new humanism, is very alien from the Reformation and, in essential points, even opposed to it. For whether the newer Protestantism assume a more rationalistic and practical shape, as in the Enlightenment, or one more artistic and universal, as in the new humanism, whether it wear the colour of deism, as in the former case or of panentheism, as in the latter, yet in both cases it is characterised by a glad feeling of confidence in man's powers, a strong immanental leaning, a tendency to overlook the obscurity of life and its inward struggles.

If our great poets and thinkers avowed themselves disciples of the Reformation, this was mainly because its human and universal character, its exaltation of personality and its strengthening of the inner life seemed to them the decisive and all-important matter. It was also because their attitude to these things was in two points essentially different from our position to-day. For one thing the historical consciousness was not awake then as now, when the differences of the various life-systems are presented to us in sharp clearness of outline so that it is absolutely impossible for one to merge easily into another. Thus in dealing with art, even men like Lessing and Goethe classed together under the simple term "ancients" the very widely divergent phases of the old-time world. People thought even in rougher and more general categories than is possible to us to-day. Then again the conception of culture has undergone a

great change since that time. Culture then was mainly idealistic culture, the inward shaping of man, which seemed quite compatible with Christianity, in the broader application of that term. Now, on the other hand, we are dominated by a realistic culture which regards the right relation of man to his environment as the sole means of salvation. If, under the former régime, art exercised lordship over life, now art must abdicate in favour of natural science. Such a development, however, tears religion and culture far apart, so that the conception of a culture-religion becomes impossible.

All this makes the situation to-day very difficult. We do not seem able to build up an idealistic culture from our own resources, so we return to the classical expression of it and seek to strengthen ourselves by emphasising its greatness and beauty. At the same time, however, realism and the experiences of the nineteenth century have made us see so much mystery and complexity in our human existence and have aroused so many doubts that we no longer have full faith in that classical idealism. Even if we could still keep to it, it would no longer satisfy us. And even so far as we do keep to it, our historical cast of thought forces us to recognise the wide gulf which separates it from the Christianity of the Reformers, the sharp contrast between the strict and solemn ethical character of Luther's religion of redemption, and the glad and for the most part artistically attuned temper of our classical panentheism.

In the light of all this, is it possible for us to believe that the needful renovation of Christianity, the carrying it back to its deepest life-sources, can be accomplished within the pale of Protestantism? It may perhaps be said that Protestantism, taken in its total extent, gives

us, in religion and immanental culture, both terms of the opposition, both poles of life. But as thus presented to us they cannot be brought together. If we are to discover in each something needful and valuable, independently of historical form, then we must set them in a larger whole of life, and there seek to adjust them with each other. Such an undertaking, however, would no longer be carried on within Protestantism. Protestantism itself would become for it a problem, a problem whose solution could only be sought in the whole of human life.

Within Protestantism we may quite honestly value both the old type and the new, but every attempt to grasp the peculiarities of each more precisely shows that they cannot exist directly alongside in one Church. For it is not a question here of a mere more or less that could be adjusted by mutual concession, but the main directions part asunder, nay, even run counter to each other, both as regards doctrines and in the shaping of life. The bond of union between the two types is simply the value attached by both alike to personality and the inward life, helped also by their common "struggle against Rome." This, however, is not enough to produce a religious community strong enough to deal with the tremendous problems of the present day. In face of the great diversity of these two types, their continued union in one ecclesiastical organisation must work more harm than good. The conflict of the one with the other consumes much energy and effects but small inward advance. The adherent of the old régime will not unreasonably regard and treat the new as an unauthorised intruder. The new may meet this reproach by urging its rights as a historical development. And this also is not unreasonable. But why then does it tie itself down to the old

forms? Why does it not seek to create new forms from its own resources?

If again we regard the two types separately, then neither seems in a position to surmount the present crisis by itself. The old Protestantism is especially hard hit by the complications involved in the old Christian doctrine of the Atonement, and as it bases itself wholly upon the Bible it is still more directly affected than Catholicism by the changes and doubts which Biblical criticism has aroused. We need only compare the present struggle over the Bible with Luther's words: "It must be the settled and adamantine conviction of every Christian that the holy Scriptures are a spiritual light far clearer than the sun itself, especially in that which concerns salvation or the one thing needful." Also it is impossible for us to share the Reformers' belief in the corruption of the world and to look upon general culture as a matter of indifference to Christianity, a conviction expressed, for example, in the words of Melanchthon: "What else is the whole generation of men outside of the spirit than a kingdom of the devil, a confused chaos of darkness?" In the Protestantism of the old type life is apt to split up into a concentrated but narrow religion, a "specific" Christianity, and a merely secular culture, dissevered from the highest aims.

The new Protestantism has the great advantage of being open-minded as regards the great problems of the age, and also of being closely linked with the work of science; but, regarded as a whole, it remains too dependent upon the panentheism of the classical period. Thus it finds difficulty in preserving for religion the necessary supremacy and in opposing a sure central truth to the tremendous complexities of the age. It does not fully ap-

preciate the dark and hostile elements in our life and does not, therefore, set itself to counteract them adequately. It is not sufficiently energetic in carrying out the renewal of the existing situation, involving as it does a metaphysic and the recognition of a mysterious depth in the universe. Hence the danger that religion may lack the stern and rugged element, the power to reject and repel, without which it cannot fulfil its task.

As regards the more specific conception of Christianity, the preponderating tendency in the new Protestantism to turn from dogma to the personality of Jesus, — justifiable though it may be to maintain a sure nucleus of fact in the face of all criticism, — does not afford a sufficiently broad and strong basis for a universal religion that is to establish and permeate the whole life. Such a personality can be put in the right light and estimated at its full significance only in the setting of a wider context. The doctrine of the Atonement supplied this for the older thought. We can find it only in a spiritual life which both supports and uplifts the world. This, however, leads us on to other paths and beyond the bounds of any particular creed.

III. The Indispensableness of a New Christianity

We arrived at the conviction that there is no hope of effecting a sufficiently thorough renewal of Christianity to satisfy present needs within the pale of the existing churches. Catholicism is too rigid for our purpose, while Protestantism is prevented from assuming the lead in this great movement, if only by reason of the irreconcilable opposition between its older and its newer types. All specific objections are further strengthened

by the consideration that the problem to-day has outgrown not merely the limits of this or that creed, but also of Christianity and even of religion itself. It has extended to the whole of life. We have become confused as to the foundations of our life and being. While the external world has been flooded with fresh light, the meaning of our own existence has become obscured. Anyone who properly appreciates the greatness of this crisis will admit that the movement for the revival of religion is not concerned with an opposition within one special church, but with a matter of pressing and urgent importance to the whole of humanity.

Earlier ages had their ideals of life and culture which comprehended all departments and made all action subserve one dominating aim. These ideals have grown pale and thin to us. It is true that the great spirits of past time speak to us also, but, as our own inner life is not sufficiently awake, we only hear their words and their soul does not penetrate to us. They leave us cold at heart, and do not further the development of our real nature. But among ourselves also certain ideals are dominant. A great field of work has been opened up in the surface regions of life and has been most fruitfully developed. The work thus undertaken now holds us in an ever firmer grip and inspires in all departments of human activity an ever growing inclination to accept the work-world as a model and enforce its ideals on all alike. Thus we are by no means concerned here with mere individual opinions or currents of thought which are only superficial and transitory, but rather with real developments of life, each striving for lordship and exclusive lordship. Common to them all, however, is the shifting of the main

centre of activity to the point where it comes into contact with environment, and the repression and stifling of everything which, under the name of inner life, seemed once of paramount importance.

Thus it is the preponderating tendency of modern science to take the nature around us for the whole of reality, and allow it to swallow up our soul-life entirely. This means that it abandons all the distinctive qualities and valuations which the soul-life seemed hitherto to possess, and also that it underrates the significance of history. The social movement works in the same direction of suppressing and absorbing the inner by the outer; economic problems and the material welfare of man are given precedence over everything else. All our effort and energy are claimed for them, and the manner in which these problems are solved is allowed to determine the whole character of life and the treatment of inner problems also. Æstheticism again and epicureanism, which have a much wider implication than the pleasure-seeking of mere individuals, push the inner life far into the background. The growing refinement of sensibility, the greater mobility and the increasing differentiation of life, the free and airy severance of subjective mood from all material fetters, these things combine to prevent any concentration of life into self-activity; they break up its unity and change it into a mere play upon the surface-side of things. Thus growth of the external world, growth of work which aims at modifying the outward conditions of life, and the reduction of man to a bundle of impressions and sensibilities, — all work together to destroy the freedom of the soul and make even the quest for it seem meaningless. And they can pursue their work all the more effectively and with the greater assump-

tion of infallibility since, firstly, they meet with no active opposition from within, — no ideal of man as a whole in himself, — and, secondly, they have behind them a record of productive achievement, the fruitfulness of which is beyond dispute. Thus it is not the mere subject whose relationship to life is becoming more intricate; the problem lies in life itself: it has moved ever more and more towards the circumference and now does not see what is to become of the centre.

Growing organisations of life can only be adequately met by similar organisations. To oppose them with mere theories would be to fight realities with shadows. If then we feel that we must have a dominating central point whence to start our construction of life, and if again the want of unity in the various peripheral constructions compel us to create some such central point, then we must have as a result a distinctive life-organisation which will ensure an equilibrium to life. This organisation, however, cannot be simply borrowed from the past, for all the achievements of the past have not prevented our falling into the present predicament. Thus we must grapple with the great problem for ourselves and seek a something more in the inwardness of our life. We must strengthen this inward element, discovering new depths in it, new facts, new connexions, till at length we arrive at an inward world which can meet the world that presses in on us from without, on an equal or even a superior footing. Thus it is no mere brooding and reflecting that we are concerned with, but an active forward development. This strengthening of the inward element we sought to reach through anchoring man in a spiritual life and a spiritual world.

But the problem of a development of life as a whole

cannot be handled in a new way without further involving the question of our whole attitude to reality and demanding from us a clear account as to our capacity to reach the necessary goal. But in following along these lines we soon discover that as the undertaking grows in magnitude, so also do the dangers. We cannot develop as a whole without encountering stiff opposition and serious obstacles both within and without; and we cannot settle with these in any thorough fashion or combat them with any hope of success without turning to religion. Thus it is the struggle for a spiritual self-preservation both of man and of mankind which drives us of necessity to religion.

For the main strength of religion lies in the fact that it can appreciate resistance and obstacles and also overcome them. The tendency of general culture is to put them as much as possible in the background where they cannot be seen; religion, on the other hand, brings them out with the utmost clearness. And this it can do without danger of succumbing to them or bringing life to a standstill, because it is in a position to rise above immediate existence and open up a new life which transcends the world. But even after doing so, it does not let the hostile element vanish altogether away, but holds it firm and thus introduces a constant strain and movement into life. The distinctive quality and greatness of religion lies in the fact that vigorous denial precedes the advance to affirmation and that even in the affirmation the element of denial is still present. Religion brings out the fact that our life is full of knots and entanglements, but also rich in ways of surmounting them, and, by keeping both aspects in close relation, it shows life as the home of contrasts, and begets a continuous move-

ment from which new forces and developments may be constantly expected to arise. Religion, moreover, reaches back to ultimate origins and can oppose to limitation, infinity; to time, eternity. Where this is clearly expressed and strongly felt, religion becomes the supreme power in life, able to subdue and annihilate all opposition, and strengthen everything with which it allies itself. Does not experience teach us that everything which has once gripped man's whole soul, even though it be the denial of religion, has yet developed into a kind of religion? We see it in our own day both in the naturalistic movement and the socialistic.

The only antidote, then, to the soullessness of modern culture and the starving of all inward life is a return to the deepening and quickening forces of religion. But our statement of the case has shown further that the revival of religion leads direct to Christianity. The world-service which Christianity has rendered in the building-up of a new world and the elevation of mankind is absolutely indispensable for religious progress. The present day, in particular, with its moral slackness, stands in urgent need of rousing and regeneration through the moral earnestness of Christianity. In the bosom of Christianity unfathomable forces are slumbering, forces which have by no means lived themselves out and are still capable of breaking forth again and driving human life into new channels with an irresistible and elemental violence. The contact of divine and human begets daimonic forces which may work either for revolution and renewal, or for destruction and desolation. To gain control of these and lead them into the paths of productive work is one main task of the religious community. But the particular way of apprehending this

task may in the lapse of time become narrow and stereotyped. Then arises the need of appealing from it to the primal force itself and summoning this to the task of new creation, — if indeed we really believe that a great world-religion is not a closed book but a growing movement which is permeating the world.

Our own epoch is one in which such a need has arisen. For whoever takes an unprejudiced view of the present situation cannot doubt but that the churches are far from being an unqualified help to religion and, in many respects, are really doing it harm. Take naturalistic monism, which for the most part is nothing more than a weakened infusion of the old Enlightenment mixed with a little natural science. Would it attract and hold such a large body of adherents, — by no means all of an iconoclastic temper, — if it were not that the religion of the churches persists in upholding a conception of the world which not only contradicts modern science in regard to individual results but is diametrically opposed to its whole way of thinking? And would German socialism, — differing in this respect from that of the English-speaking countries, — take up such an uncompromising attitude to religion and Christianity, were it not that it looks upon the Church as mainly a political arrangement, pledged to uphold "throne and altar"? It is, moreover, no unfriendly criticism, but a fact borne out by statistics, that in all countries there is a continued diminution, at times quite appalling in its extent, in the number of those who dedicate themselves to the service of the Church and also in the number of those who take a vital interest in her work. Are we to view this declension from religion complacently and allow it to assume still greater propor-

tions? Through fear of touching the churches are we to look on quietly while religion slips out of our life? Or are we to put religion above the churches and seek new ways, mindful of Goethe's saying: "Necessity is the best counsellor"?

We do not feel that in this conviction of ours we are actuated by any hostility to the churches. We know how to appreciate the good work they are doing even to-day in strengthening and deepening life and raising the moral tone of the community. But it is just one of the tragic features of man's lot that individual excellence and industry are of no avail, if once the whole movement be no longer in touch with the spiritual life of the time or in actual opposition to it. This, however, describes the position of the churches to-day, so that while asserting Christianity we must yet take up a negative attitude as regards the churches.

If in all this progressive movement we take as our standard of measurement the position of the spiritual life as it has worked itself out in history, then we are in no danger of abandoning truth in the interests of a situation which is merely transient. For the fluctuation of human opinion and sentiment with its fickleness and proneness to reaction is something very different from the gradual building-up of a historical structure, the progressive revelation and development of the spiritual life which goes on independently of any given temporal situation. With regard to the former it is impossible to be sufficiently critical and sceptical. Throughout this work we too have waged incessant warfare against superficial tendencies of the time. But that other movement, with its gradual elaboration of a permanent truth-content, must be present in our own effort, further-

ing and guiding it. Here we have the origin of an order of things which has been developing throughout the world's history, which is proof against resistance, and will have a deep and permanent influence upon humanity. The spirit of the time and the time-spirit are fundamentally different things. He who wishes to comprehend the spirit of the time must free himself from the time-spirit. And the spirit of the time demands to-day a rejuvenation of the religious life, in which new wine shall no longer be poured into old wineskins. It makes this demand not directly on behalf of religion nor with any great parade of religion, but rather out of concern for the salvation of the spiritual life of humanity, the salvation of a spiritual civilisation, the salvation of human personality. Anything that proceeds from such a necessity of the world's development carries within itself the sure guarantee of success, however uncertain we may be to-day of paths to the goal. And the time for winning men over to the movement will be that moment in which the gradual process of killing life's soul comes home to the personal feeling, and, from being perhaps an amusing spectacle, is transformed into an all too painful experience. Then too it will dawn upon man clearly that when once the spiritual life as a whole is lost, no spiritual values can remain at certain isolated spots and along particular lines of research; that there need be no further talk of good and beautiful or even of true, and that love, justice, and honour are but foolish conceits. When once the movement becomes as strong as this, it will soon find the requisite forms.

To-day we are still far from such a crisis, and we must first of all strive to find the right line of quest. But the seekers are many, and it is important that they

should be far more conscious than they are of a community of effort, that they should come closer together and work unitedly to restore first of all such outward conditions as are requisite for any creative advance. With us in Germany it is the relation of Church to State and especially the existence of a Protestant established Church which stands in urgent need of change, — particularly so in the interests of religion itself. The defenders of the State-Church seem to us vastly to underestimate the importance of the crisis in which Christianity finds itself to-day, and also not to appreciate fully the change which the State has undergone since the time of the Reformation. When a whole nation is dominated by one uniform religious conviction, there may be great advantages in the arrangement by which the State takes over the guidance of the Church. It is quite otherwise, however, when the age is rent with acute religious differences as is ours to-day. Then one of two things is inevitable: either the State will help one of the parties and suppress the other, or it will seek some compromise which, as being an impossible adjustment, will in the end satisfy nobody. The older states, moreover, had a far more permanent character than belongs to our modern communities with their parliamentary government and party system. Under modern conditions, the welding of Church and State exerts an unpardonable pressure, particularly on the schools, and the weed of hypocrisy is all too prone to flourish. Pressure and hypocrisy between them are continually exciting much wrath and bitterness against religion and giving the ill-disposed an opening for regarding it as a mere arrangement of political expediency. Jatho's case shows us very clearly how untenable the present system is. We can hardly deny

that every church which wishes to be more than a mere debating-club on religious and philosophical themes must require that its teachers shall possess certain fundamental convictions; and it is equally certain that in the case in question the deviation from recognised church orthodoxy was very considerable. How came it to pass, then, that the decision of the Court, which in theory could scarcely be impugned, yet aroused so much contradiction and even anger? It was because a decision pronounced in the name of an established State-Church excludes the man affected by it from the religious community of his nation, and thus inflicts a certain stain upon him and puts difficulties in the way of his religious effectiveness. So long as the Protestant Church bears the form of an established State-Church, such a settlement should never have met with the approval of broad-minded men. When in scientific work a formally correct syllogism leads to a false conclusion, we take it for granted that there is some flaw in the premises. When in practical life the correct application of a statutory definition wounds many earnest-minded men, the fault must lie with the definition. Thus this case affords an eloquent proof of the fact that the days are gone by in which the union of State and Church was beneficial to religion. That the severing of the old connexion need not involve any disturbance, but can be effected coolly and without animosity is proved very convincingly by recent Swiss examples.

At the same time we must indeed bear in mind that the severance of Church from State does not in itself give us any direct assurance as regards the one matter of supreme importance, the rejuvenescence and strengthening of religion. It simply supplies a condition which

facilitates constructive work along this line. It is highly probable that the severance of Church from State and the disruption which we might expect of the Church which stands for unity would be productive, in the first instance, of much error and confusion, much defection and denial. But at the same time one thing will be secured, and that the most important of all, — complete sincerity. Sincerity must be our watchword if religion is to rise up again and triumph over the soullessness of life. The very marrow of our life is eaten into and our whole personality weakened when sham and half-truth prevail in the very region which should be, even if it is not, sacred to all men, — the region of our ultimate convictions. Unless these evils be thoroughly driven out thence, there is no escape from the present spiritual crisis. To oppose the demand for complete sincerity by a policy of expediency, and to keep back the expression of inward necessities through fear of undesirable consequences should be particularly repugnant to Protestantism, which owes its very existence to an uncompromising adherence to such inward necessities and whose leader uttered the strong and forceful words: "Offence here, — offence there; need is all-powerful and cannot offend. I am to spare weak consciences, so far as I can do this without danger to my soul. When such danger is involved, then I must consult my soul, though half the world be offended or the whole of it."

These words of Luther show clearly what this question depends upon in last resort. In this great movement, this serious struggle, those alone can engage with confidence and gladness who recognise a higher life than that of the merely humanistic culture with its utilitarian goods, and who at the same time cherish the conviction

that religion is not a mere product of human hopes and desires, but that it opens up and brings into our life a wealth of concrete actuality which both transcends and permeates the world, and that it is, in first instance, not man's work but God's. If on this point the divisions among men become accentuated and the force of the great Either-Or makes itself very clearly felt in our life, this is all pure gain as regards its strength and truthfulness. All anxious considerations as to the possible and probable result of an open and courageous line of action may be met by the following reflection: "Either religion is merely a product of human wishes and ideas which have been sanctioned by tradition and society, in which case, as a human fabrication, it must be destroyed by the advancing tide of spiritual progress, and no art or might or cunning can arrest its downfall; — or religion is based upon facts which are more than human, and then the fiercest attack is powerless to shake it, but will rather help it, through all stress of human need and toil, to come to its full strength and unfold more freely its eternal truth" ("Truth of Religion").

Our question was whether to-day we can still be Christians. Our answer is that we not only can but must be Christians, — only, however, on the one condition that Christianity be recognised as a progressive historic movement still in the making, that it be shaken free from the numbing influence of ecclesiasticism and placed upon a broader foundation. Thus here lies the task of our time and the hope of the future.

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